

# Domestic Girlfriend

22



DOMESTIC GIRLFRIEND  
KEI SASUGA  
GUILTY



# Domestic Girlfriend

22

D O M E  
G I R L

**KEI SASUGA**



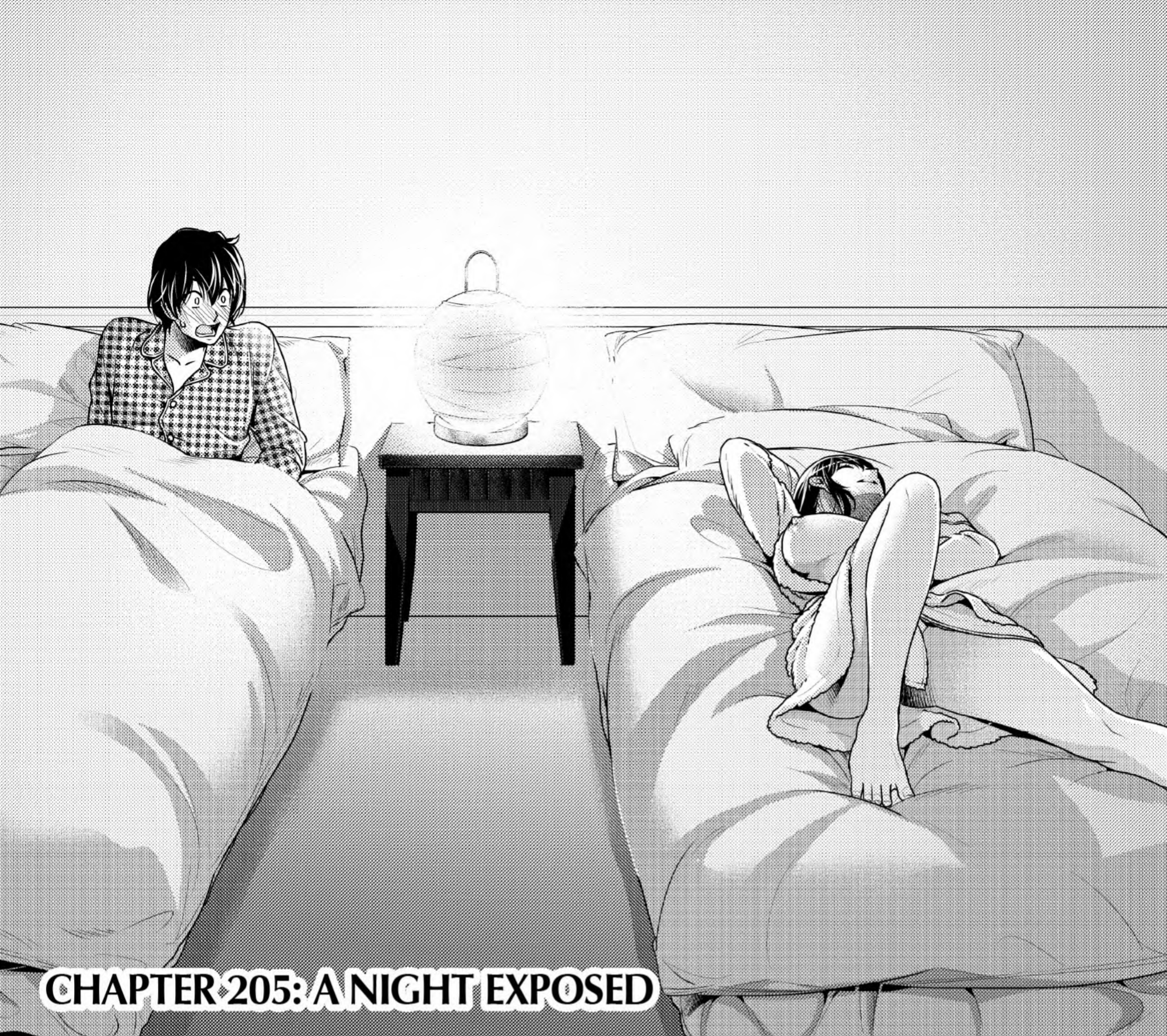
D O M E  
G I R L



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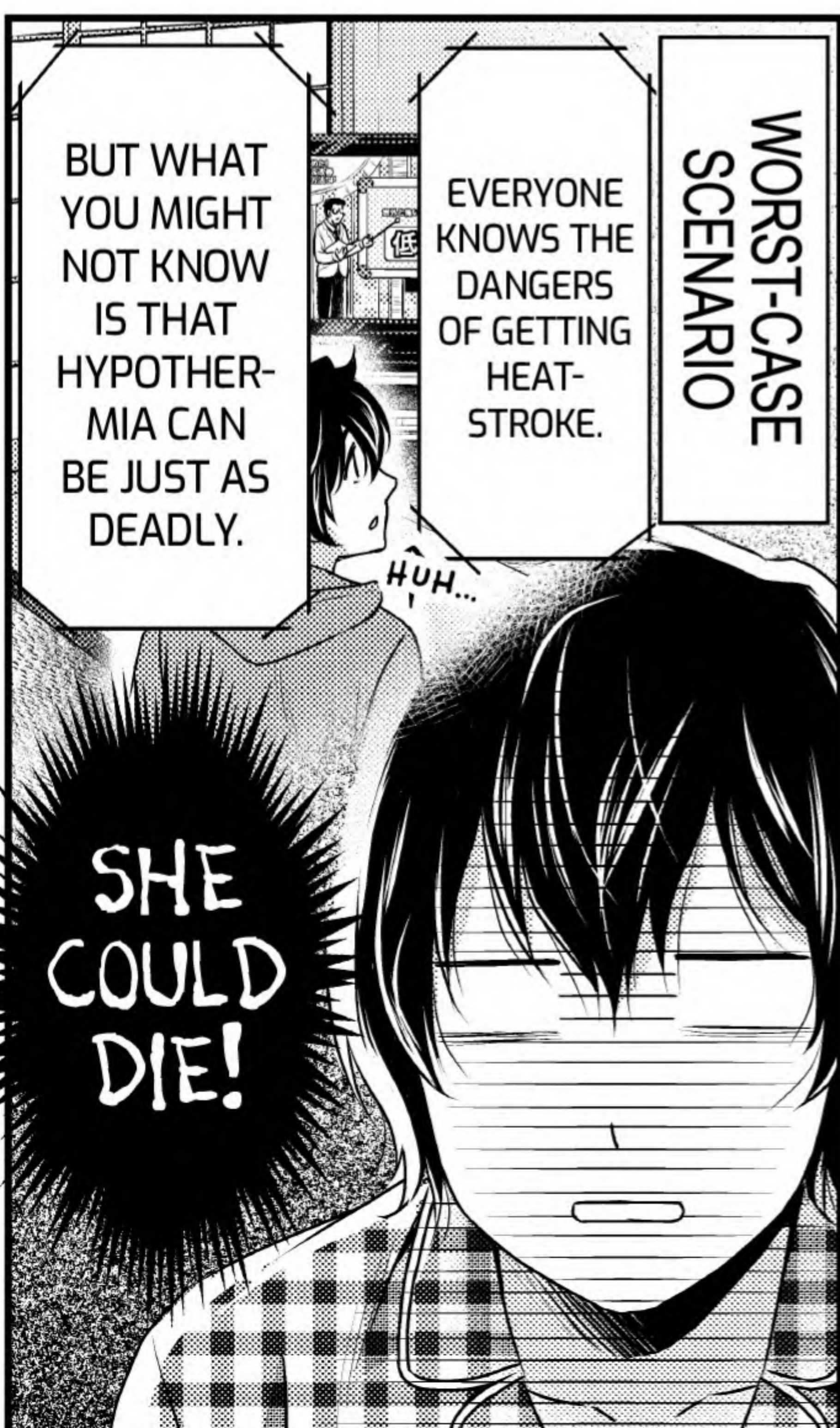




**CHAPTER 205: A NIGHT EXPOSED**











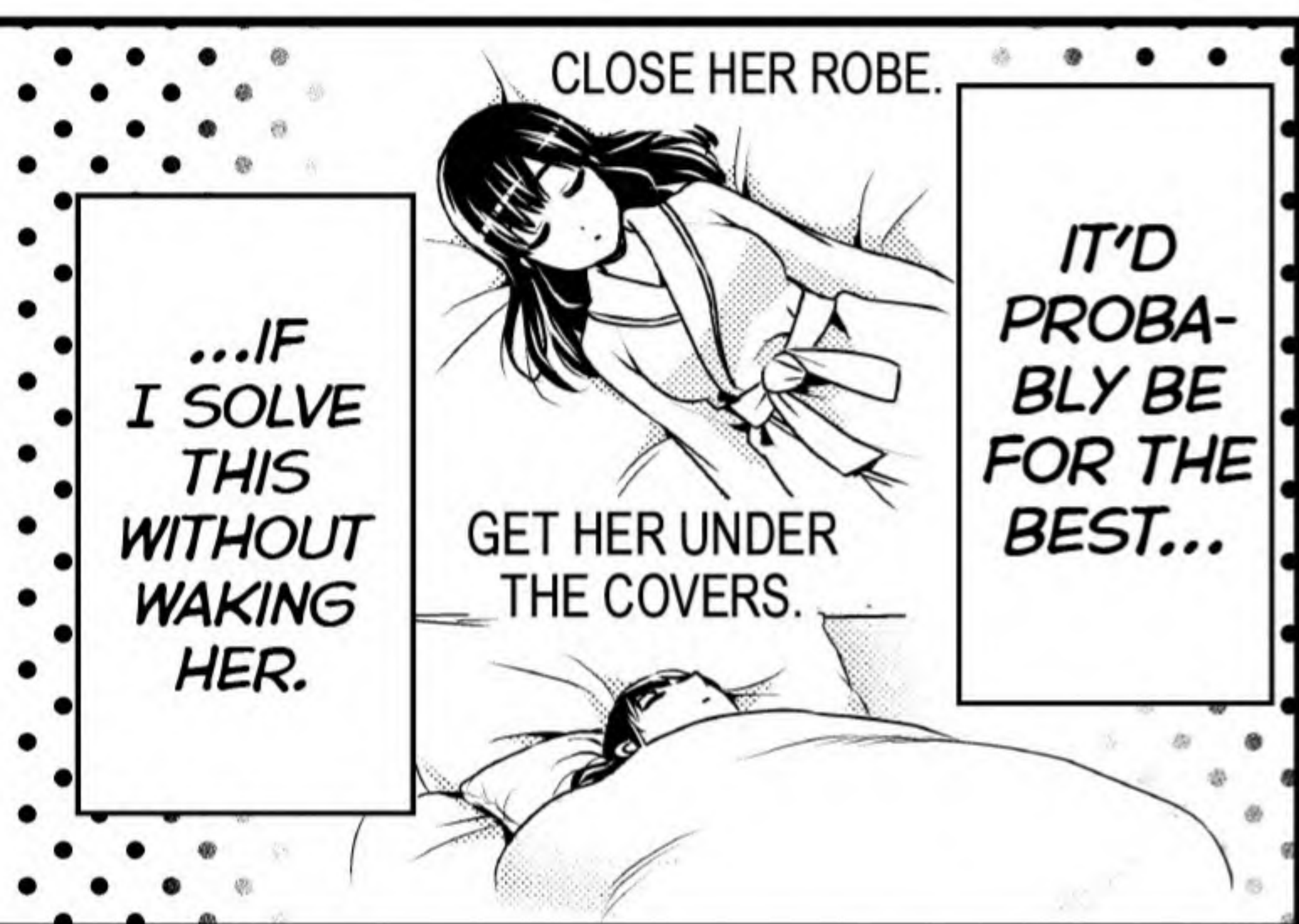
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, NATSUO-KUN?!

HUH ?!

HINA-

WAIT!  
IF SHE  
WAKES  
UP  
NOW...

I-IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!



CLOSE HER ROBE.

...IF I SOLVE THIS WITHOUT WAKING HER.

GET HER UNDER THE COVERS.

IT'D PROBABLY BE FOR THE BEST...



HINA-NEE...

HI-

OH, CRAP!  
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!

YOU SHOULD PUT YOUR PAJAMAS ON AND GET IN BED. YOU'RE GONNA CATCH A COLD...



MM!



HUH ?

DID SHE WA-



STEP ONE:  
CLOSE HER ROBE...

DON'T WORRY, HINA-NEE. I'LL TRY NOT TO LOOK.











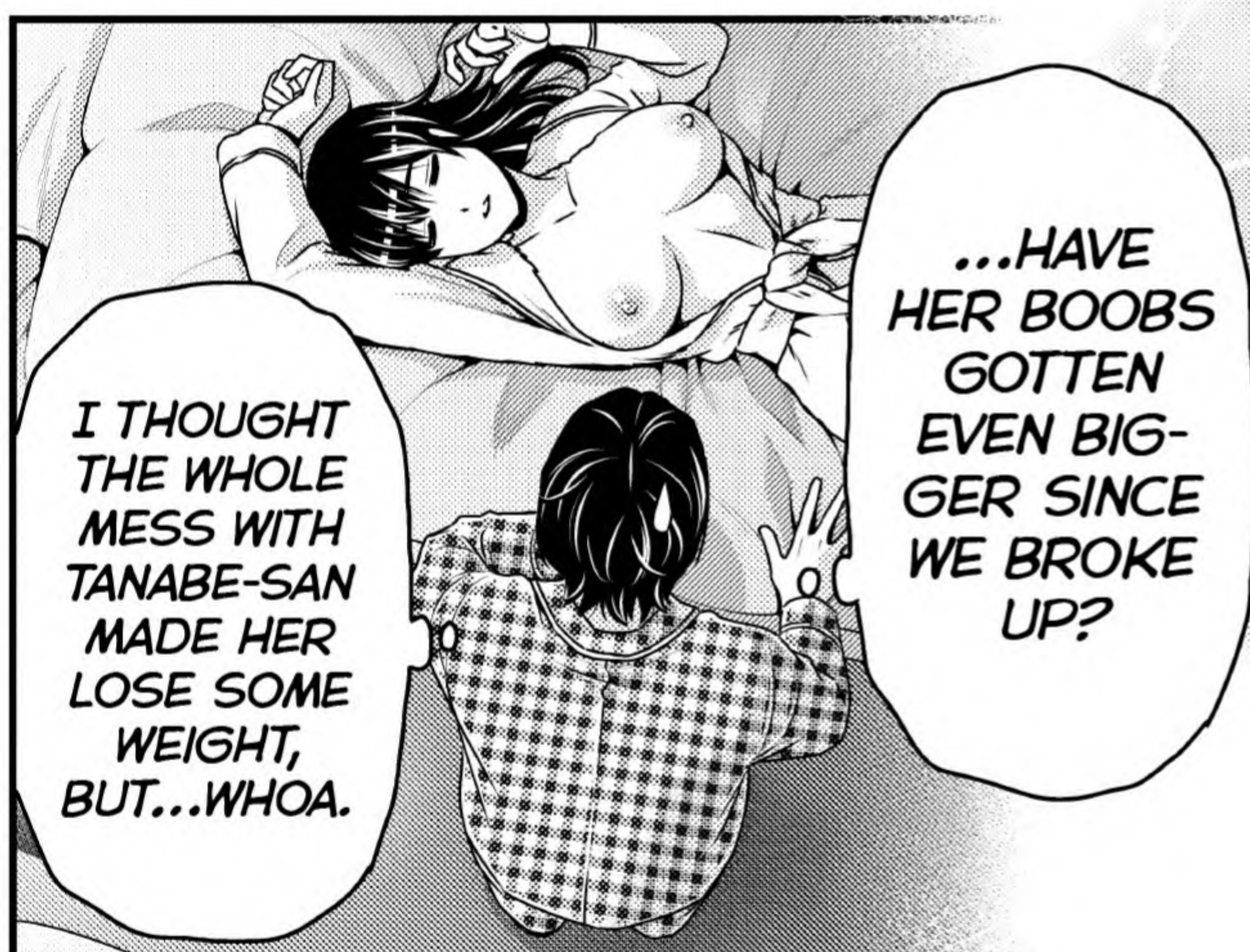


GOD,  
TALK  
ABOUT A  
SINFUL  
BODY,  
MAN.

HER  
ROBE  
WON'T  
STAY  
SHUT...



ACTU-  
ALLY...



I THOUGHT  
THE WHOLE  
MESS WITH  
TANABE-SAN  
MADE HER  
LOSE SOME  
WEIGHT,  
BUT...WHOA.

...HAVE  
HER BOOBS  
GOTTEN  
EVEN BIG-  
GER SINCE  
WE BROKE  
UP?



HUH? YOU  
FORGOT  
TO TELL ME  
ABOUT A  
BOOK YOU  
RECOM-  
MEND?

SURE.  
THANKS  
FOR LET-  
TING ME  
KNOW!

HE-  
HELLO  
?!  
OH...  
RUI?



ビクビク  
JOLT  
ビクビク





SHE'S  
GETTING  
COLDER  
BY THE  
SECOND.

OOPS.

I GOTTA  
GET HER  
DRESSED  
FAST.



TAP

7

7  
PHEEW



SHIBA-  
SAKI  
MEN-  
TIONED  
SOME-  
THING  
LIKE  
THAT.

I'M  
NOT AT  
LIBERTY TO  
DIVULGE  
THAT  
INFORMA-  
TION.

WHERE'D  
YOU EVEN  
LEARN  
THAT FUN  
FACT?

FOR  
REAL  
?!

YOU DON'T  
KNOW? THE COLD  
MAKES MEN'S  
NETHER REGIONS  
SHRINK, BUT I  
HEAR WOMEN'S  
NIPPLES  
ACTUALLY  
GET ERECT.

I  
REMEM-  
BER A  
WHILE  
BACK,



GUESS I'M  
JUST GONNA  
HAVE TO  
ADDRESS THE  
ROOT OF THE  
PROBLEM.



...



OH, YEAH!  
SO WHAT  
IF SHE'S  
PRACTICALLY  
NAKED? I CAN  
JUST PULL  
THE COVERS  
OVER HER!

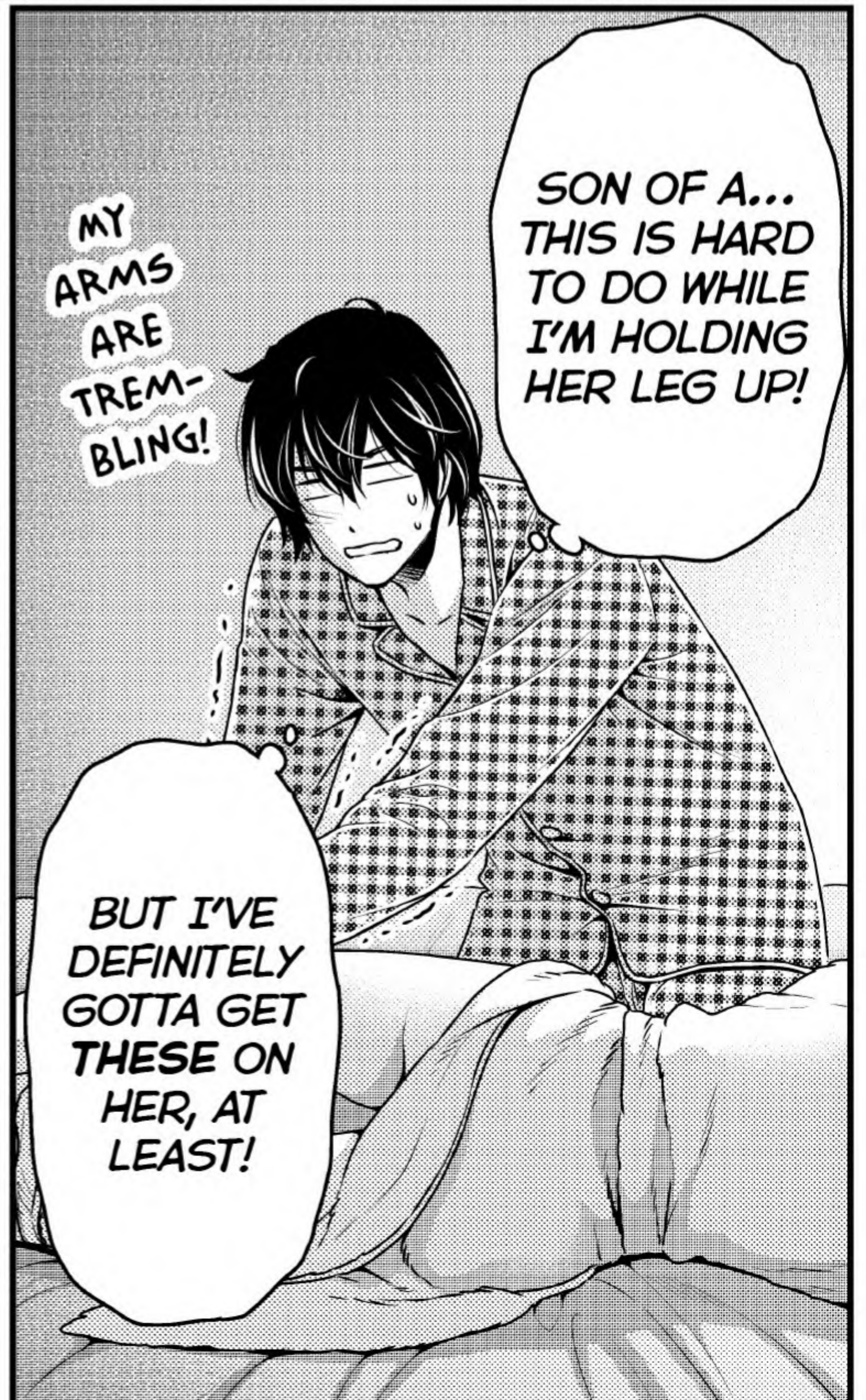


BAP





















IT'D BE GREAT IF SHE ROLLS OVER AGAIN, BUT...

THE REAL ISSUE'S GONNA BE HOOKING IT.



UP  
SW

Ay...  
5...

...I SHOULDN'T COUNT ON IT.

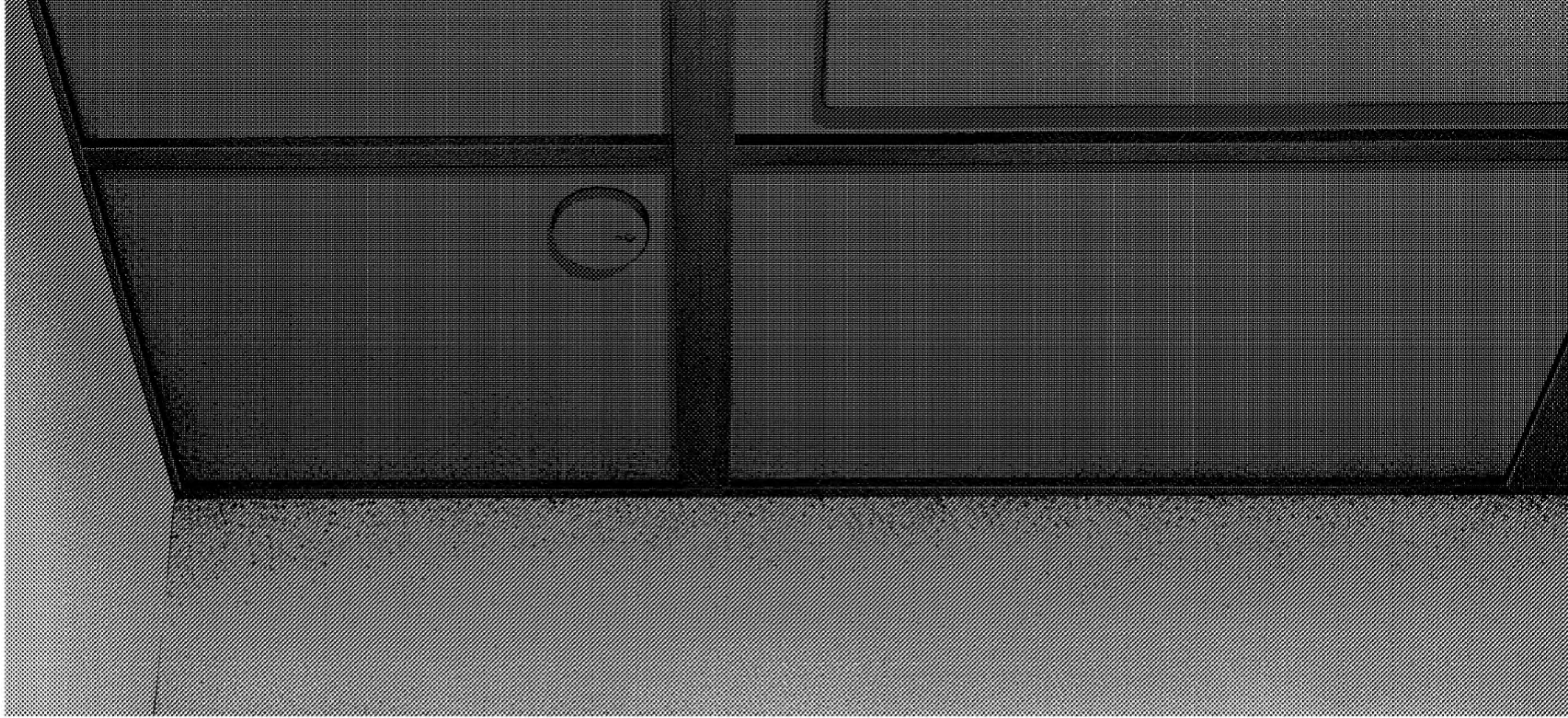


FIRST, SLIP IT OVER HER ARM...

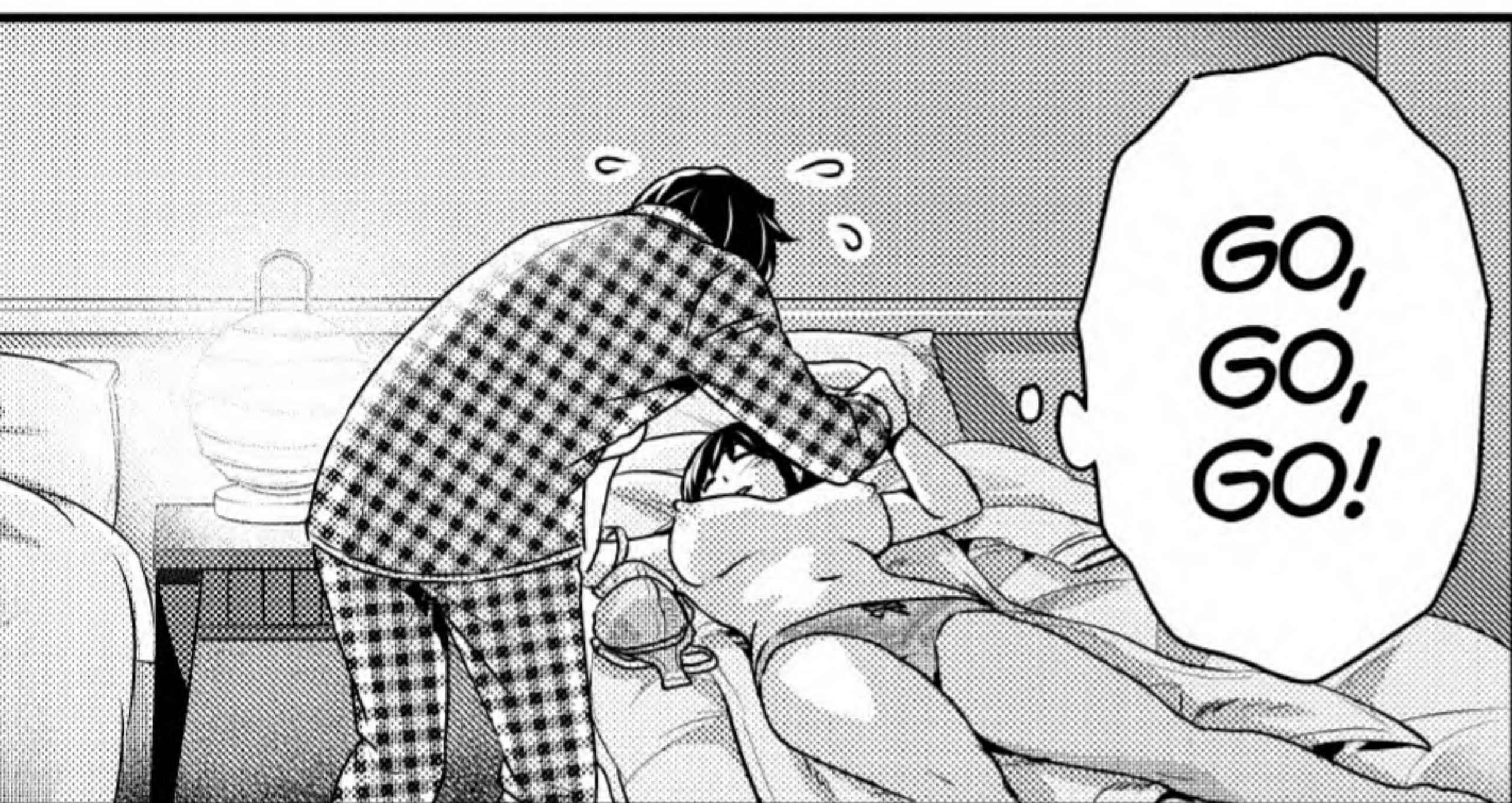
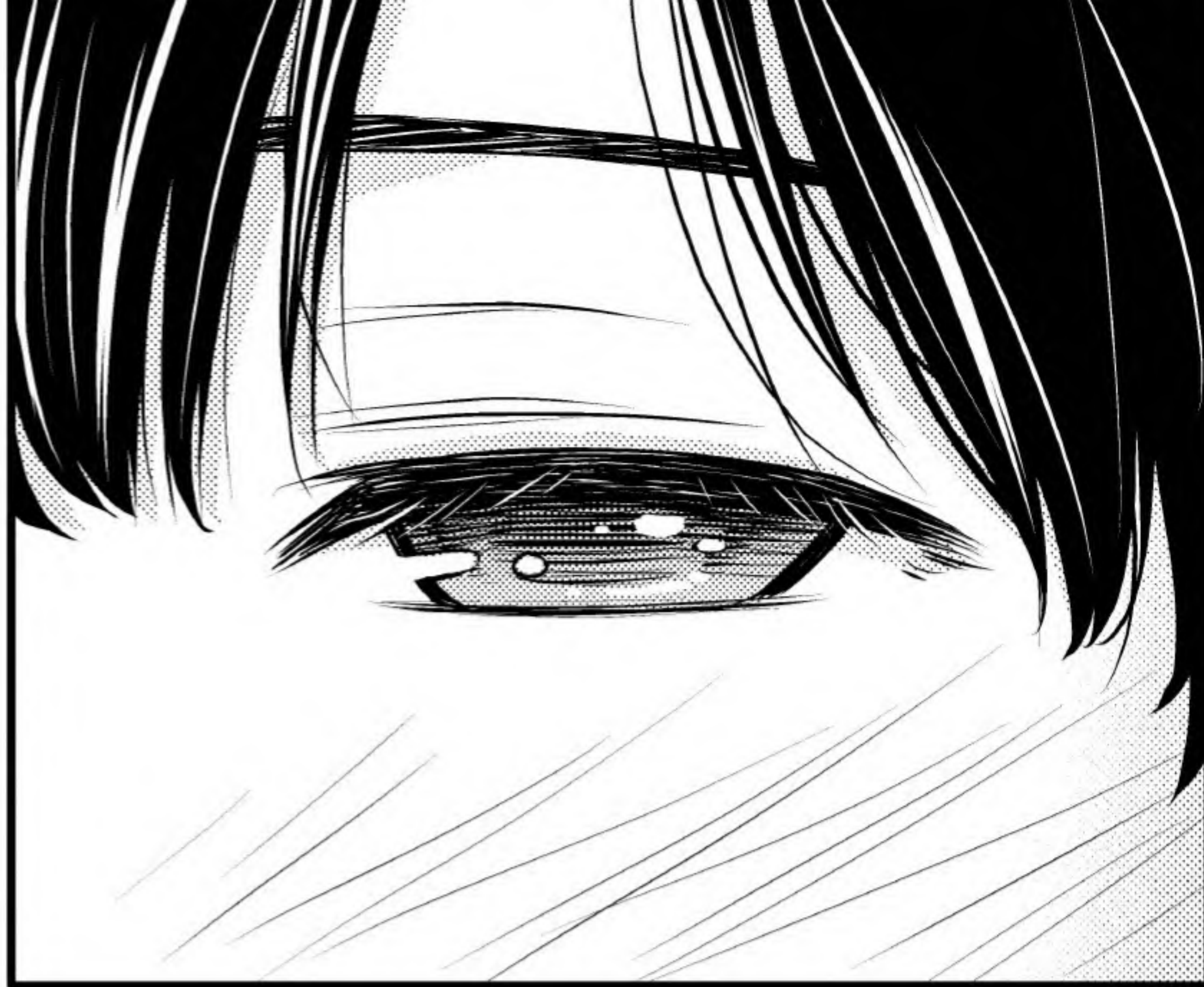




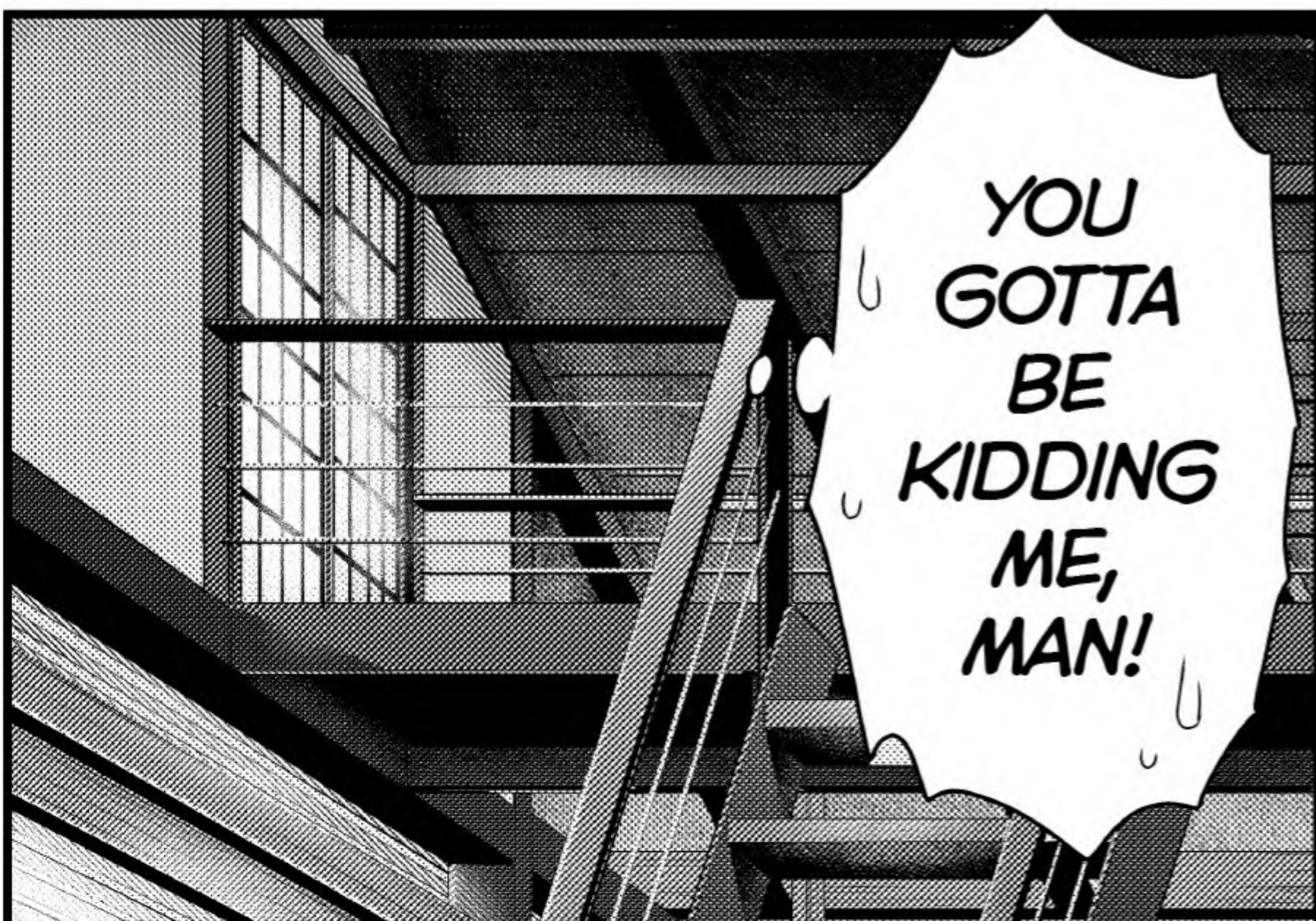




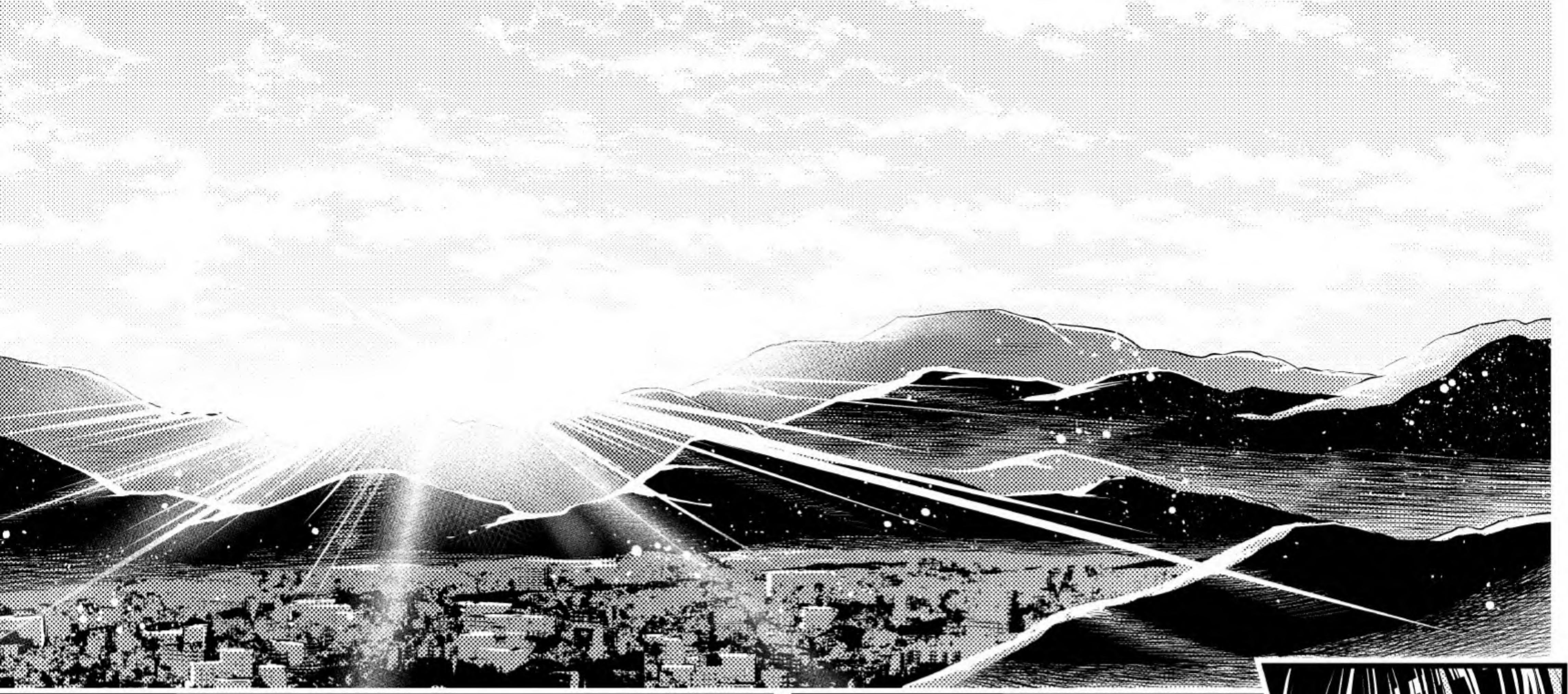












I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING AFTER I GOT BACK FROM THE BAR.

ISN'T THIS ROOM ...?

HUH ?

WHEN'D I PUT PAJAMAS ON?



NATSUO-KUN...

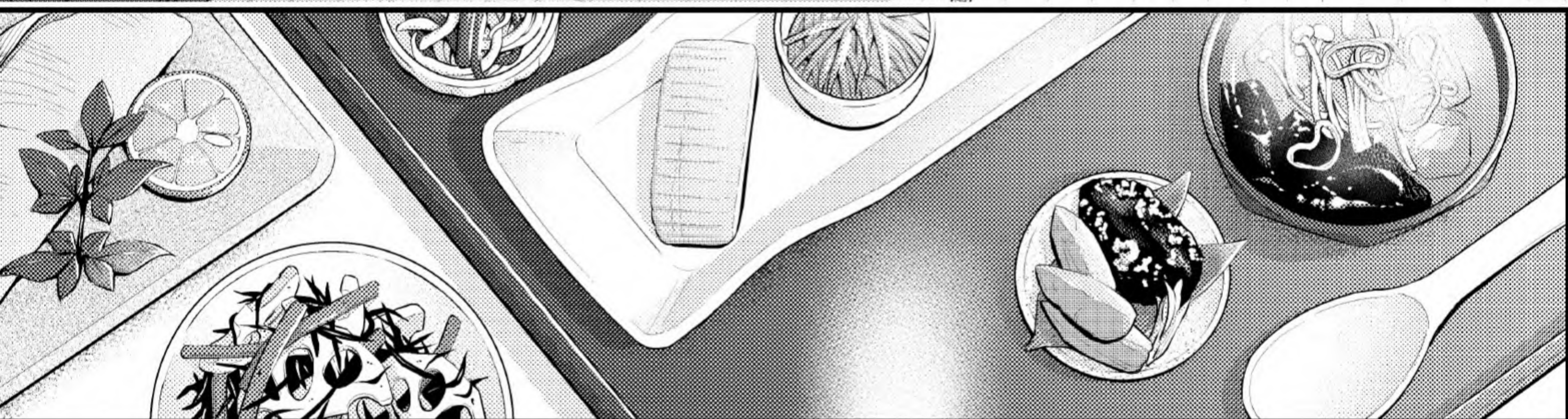
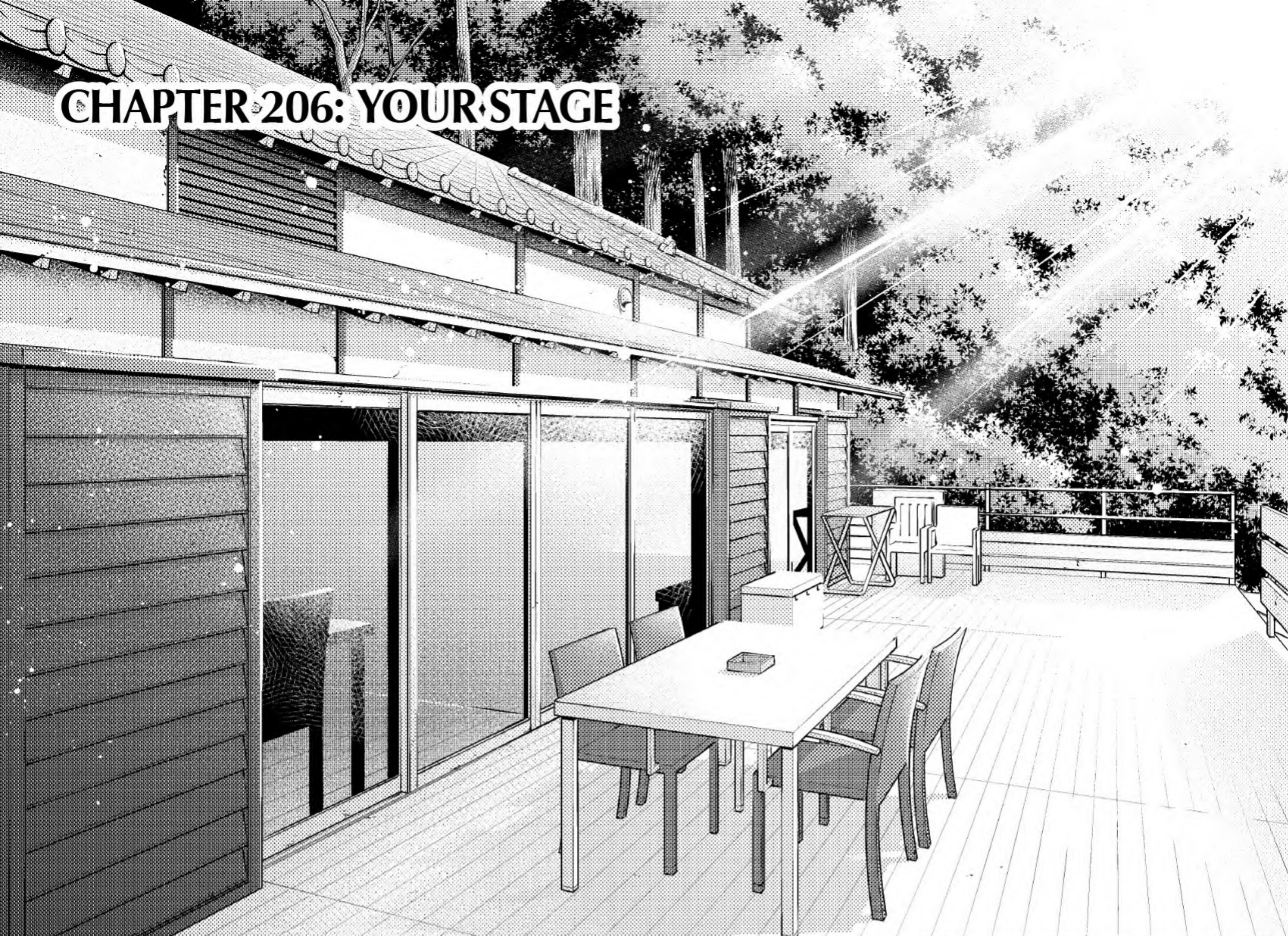




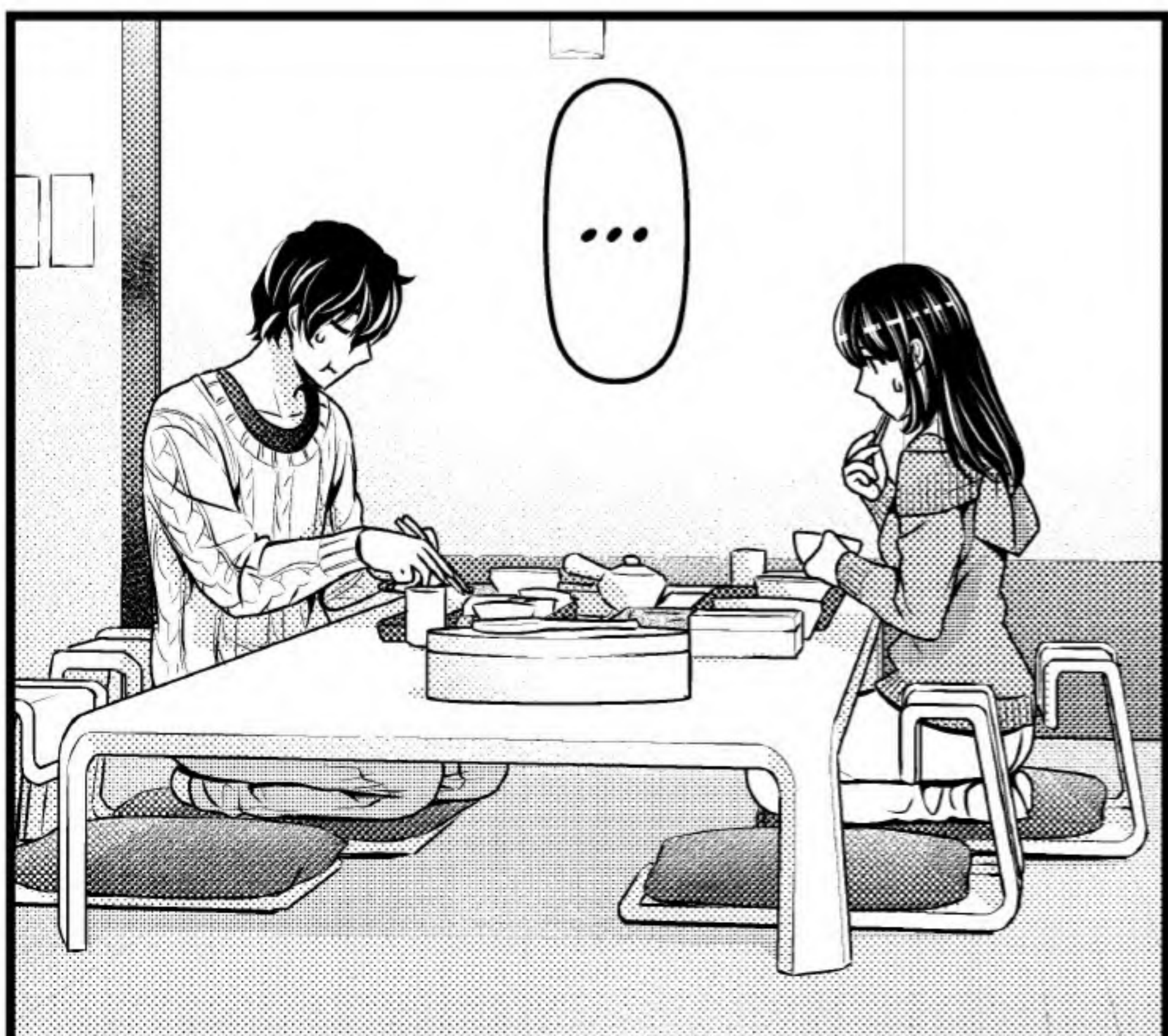




# CHAPTER 206: YOUR STAGE







I GOT MORE THAN A FEW EYE-FULS OF HER NAKED BODY LAST NIGHT.





OH.

A FRIEND  
GAVE ME  
TICKETS  
TO HER  
TROUPE'S  
PLAY TOO.

PLANS  
?

RIGHT NOW,  
JUST HELPING  
OUT AT TOGEN-  
SENSEI'S  
PLACE AND  
CLUB...



GOT ANY  
PLANS?

OH,  
YEAH!

WINTER  
BREAK'S  
COMING  
UP,  
RIGHT?



SERI-  
ZAWA-  
SAN?!

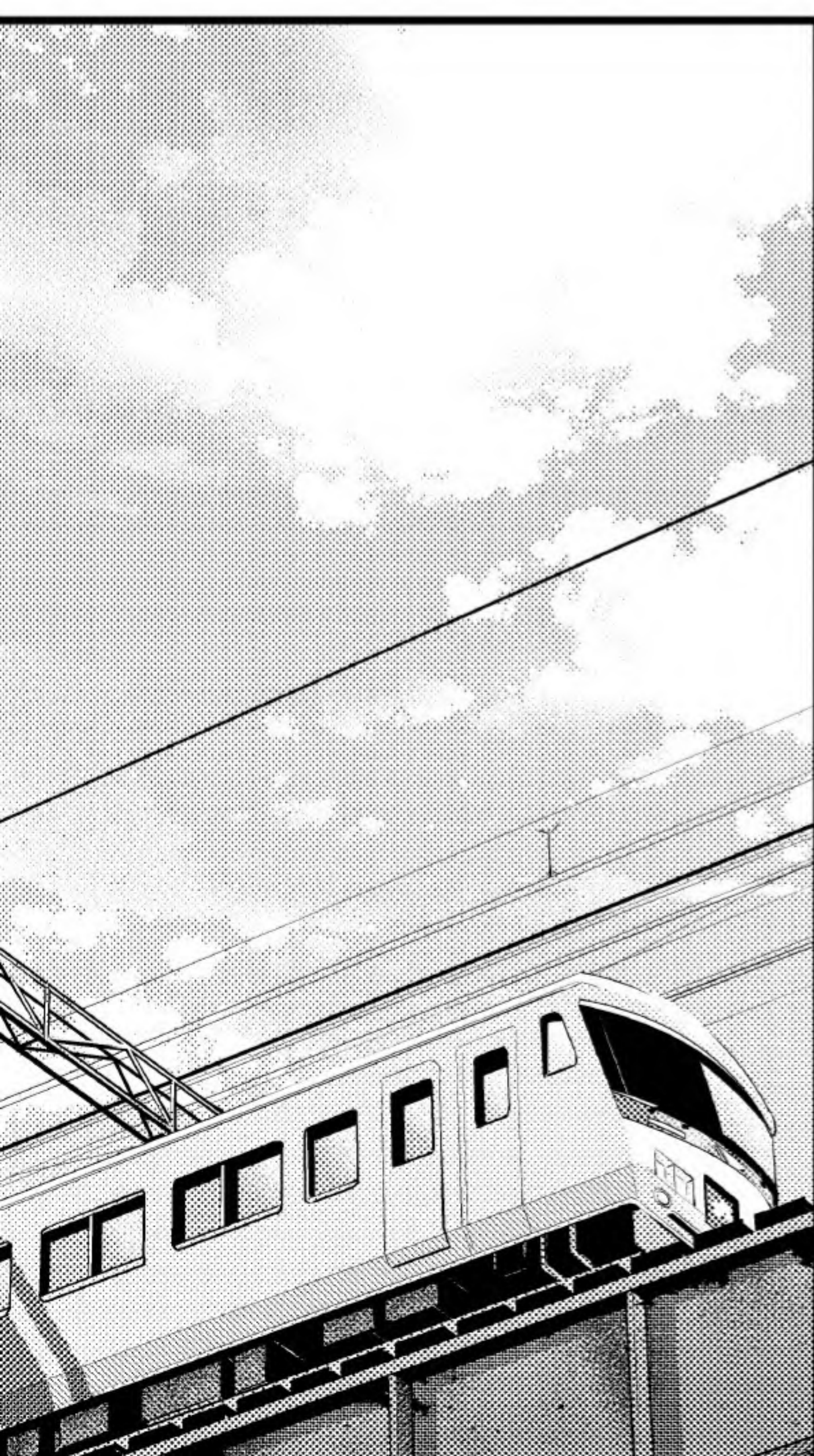


YEAH,  
THESE  
GUYS  
ARE  
PROS.

DO YOU  
REMEMBER  
THE GIRL WHO  
PLAYED THE  
LEAD IN OUR  
NEWCOMER  
PERFOR-  
MANCE? THEY  
SCOUTED  
HER.

IS THE  
TROUPE  
DIFFERENT  
FROM THE  
CLUB?

I THINK  
IT'S A  
CHRIST-  
MAS  
SHOW.



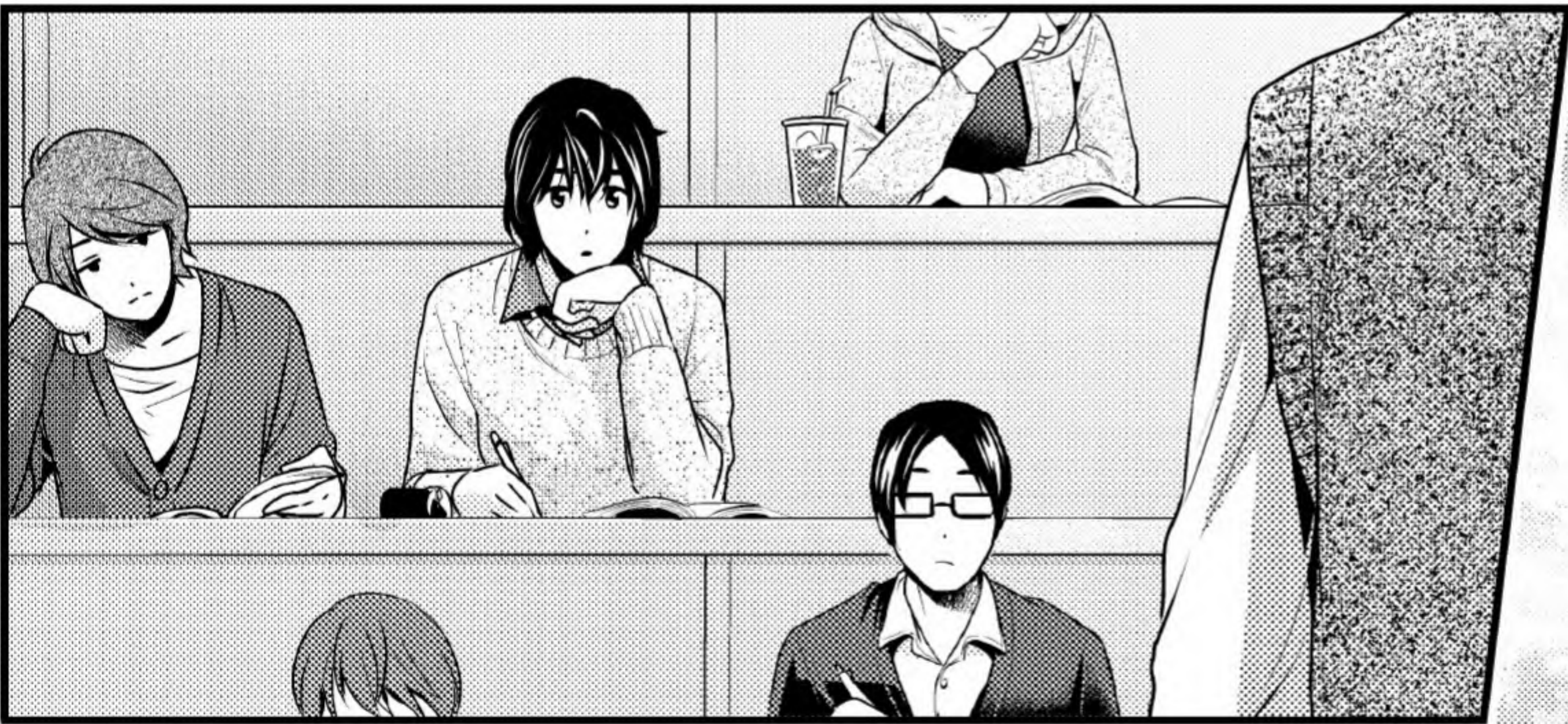
SURE.

BUT ONLY IF  
WORK AND  
EVERYTHING  
ELSE LINES  
UP, OKAY?

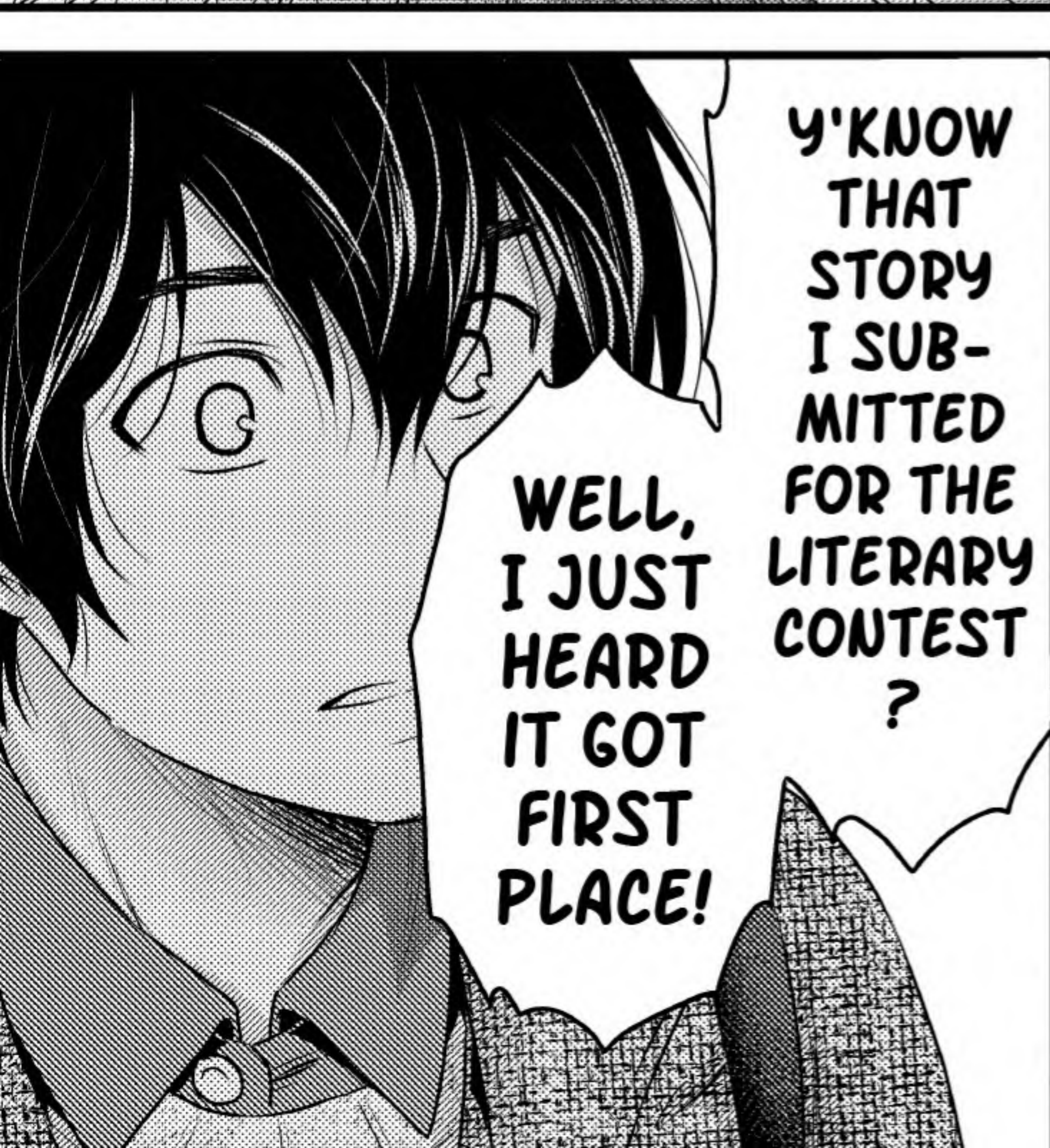
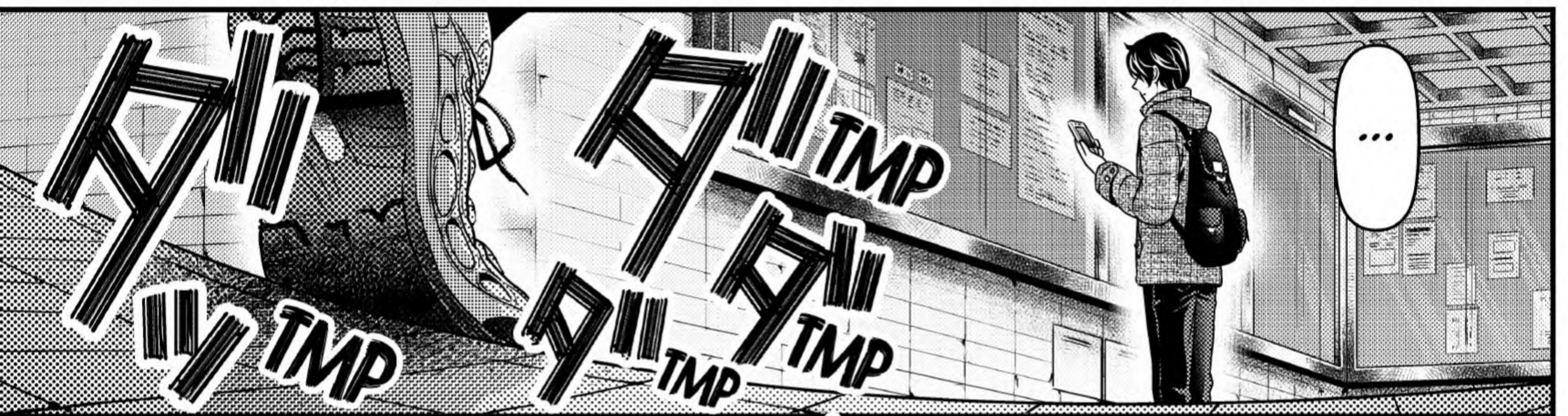
MIND IF I  
GO WITH  
YOU?  
I'M SO  
THERE!

I LOVE HER  
ACTING!  
SHE HAS  
A GREAT  
VOICE TOO!

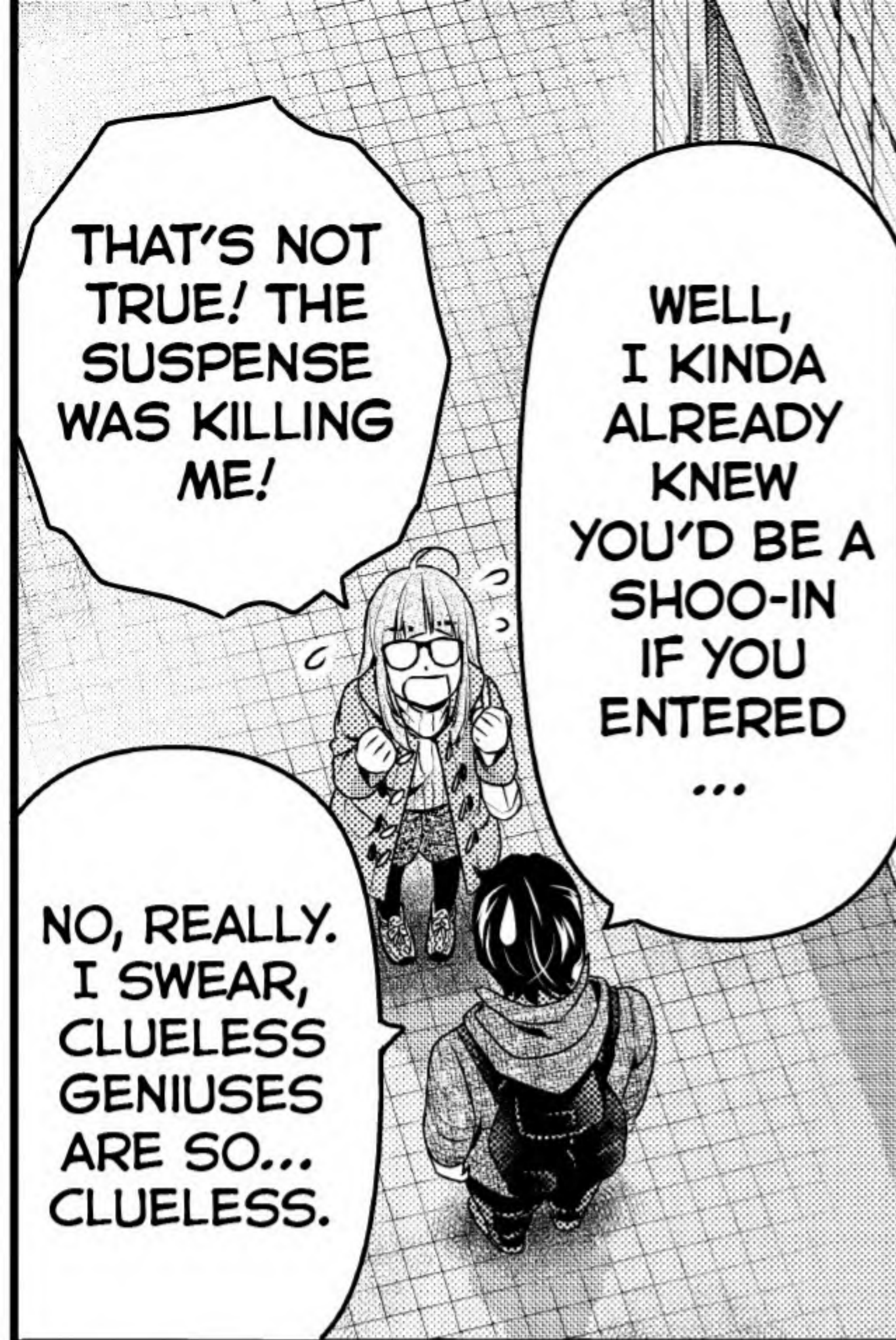












THAT'S NOT TRUE! THE SUSPENSE WAS KILLING ME!

WELL, I KINDA ALREADY KNEW YOU'D BE A SHOO-IN IF YOU ENTERED ...

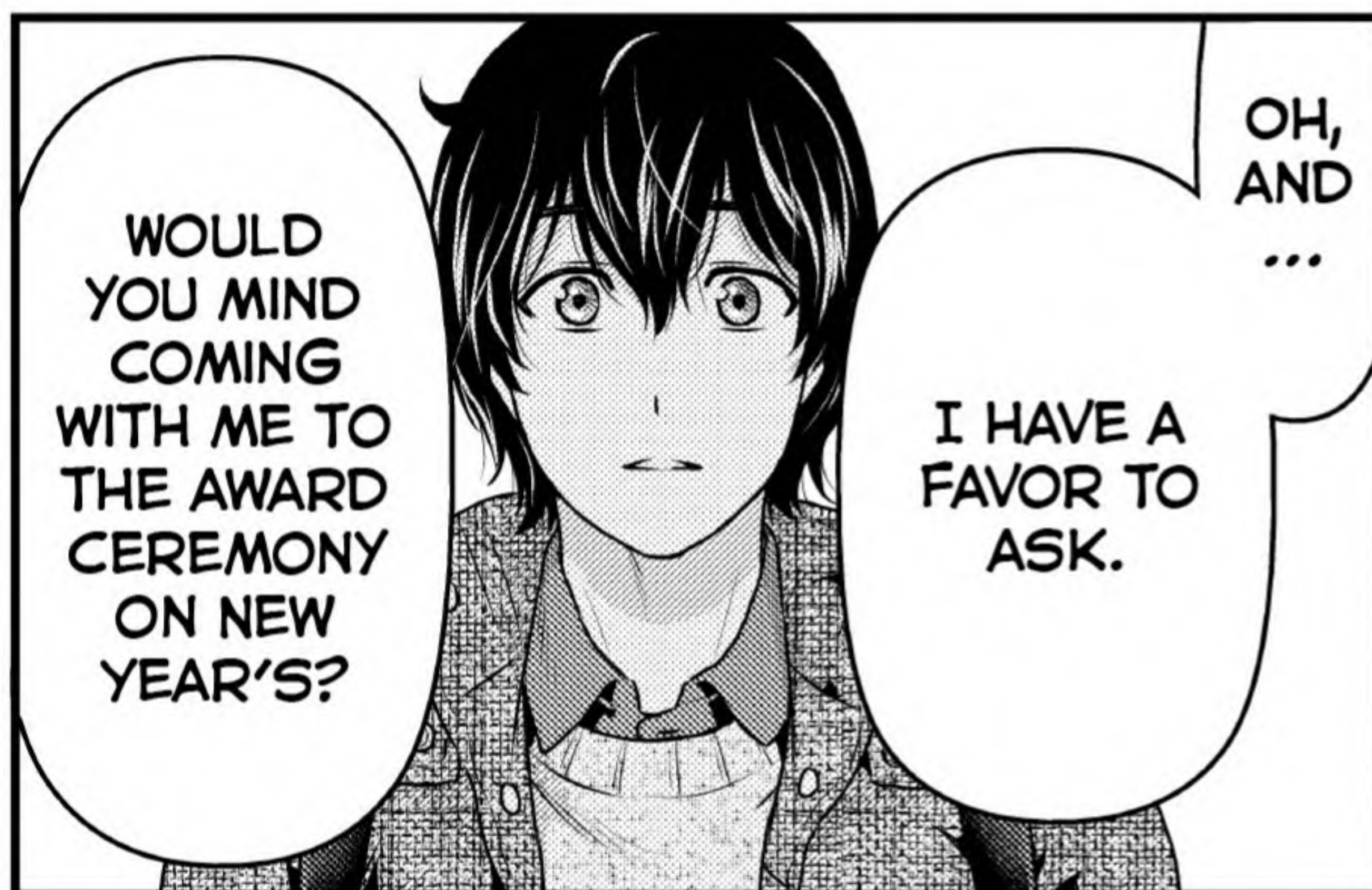
NO, REALLY. I SWEAR, CLUELESS GENIUSES ARE SO... CLUELESS.



WHAT'S WITH THE LIMP REACTION ?!

CONGRATS.

HUH... OH, YEAH?



WOULD YOU MIND COMING WITH ME TO THE AWARD CEREMONY ON NEW YEAR'S?

I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.

OH, AND ...



SURE THING.

KEEP THIS A SECRET, OKAY? IT'S NOT OFFICIAL YET.



SURE, I DON'T MIND.

REALLY?! AWESOME!



BUT I STILL WANT SOMEONE THERE FOR MORAL SUPPORT,

SO I JUST THOUGHT I'D ASK YOU SINCE YOU'RE A LITERARY AWARD VET AND ALL. WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME?

I CAN'T EXACTLY BRING MY MOM SINCE SHE'S NOT BIG ON ME WRITING IN THE FIRST PLACE, Y'KNOW?

WELL,

ME ?!

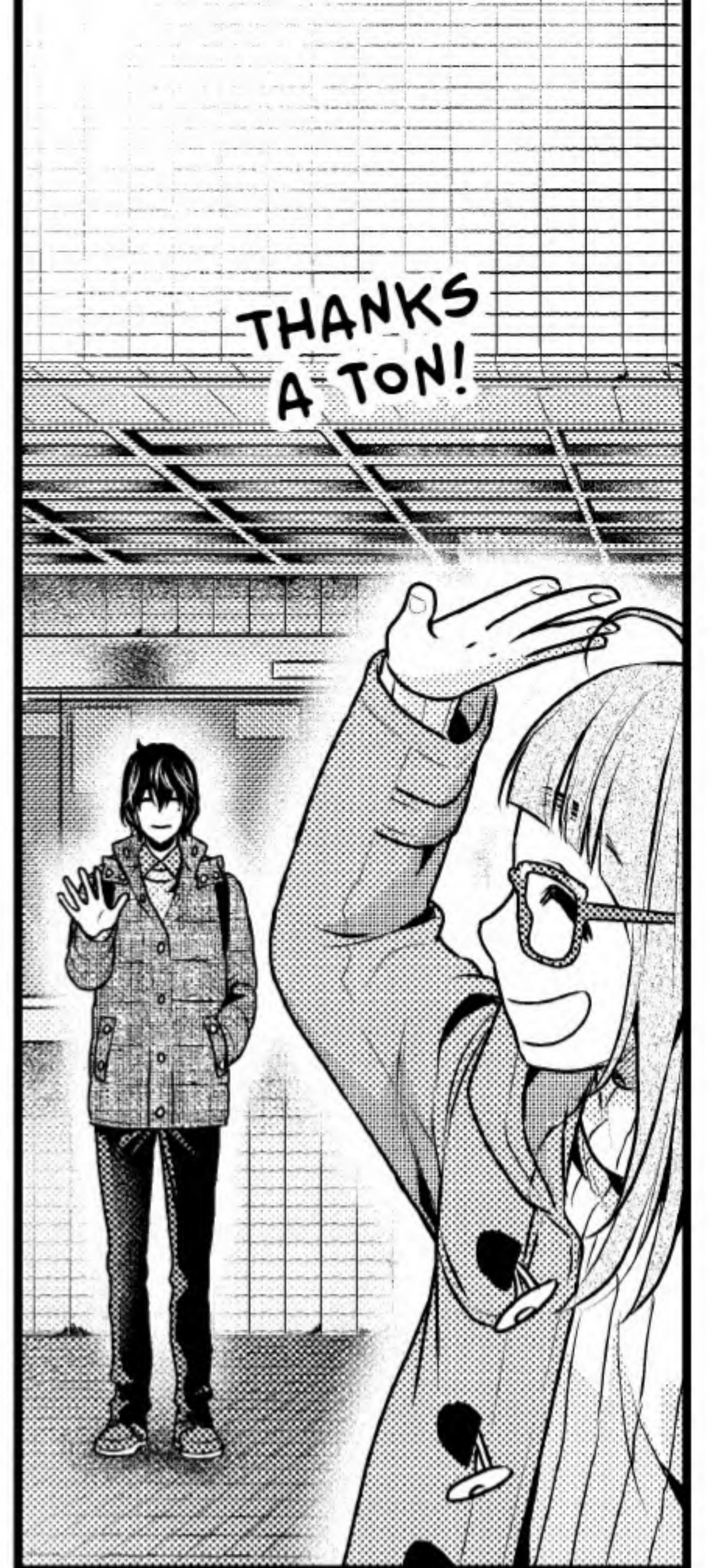
HUH ?!



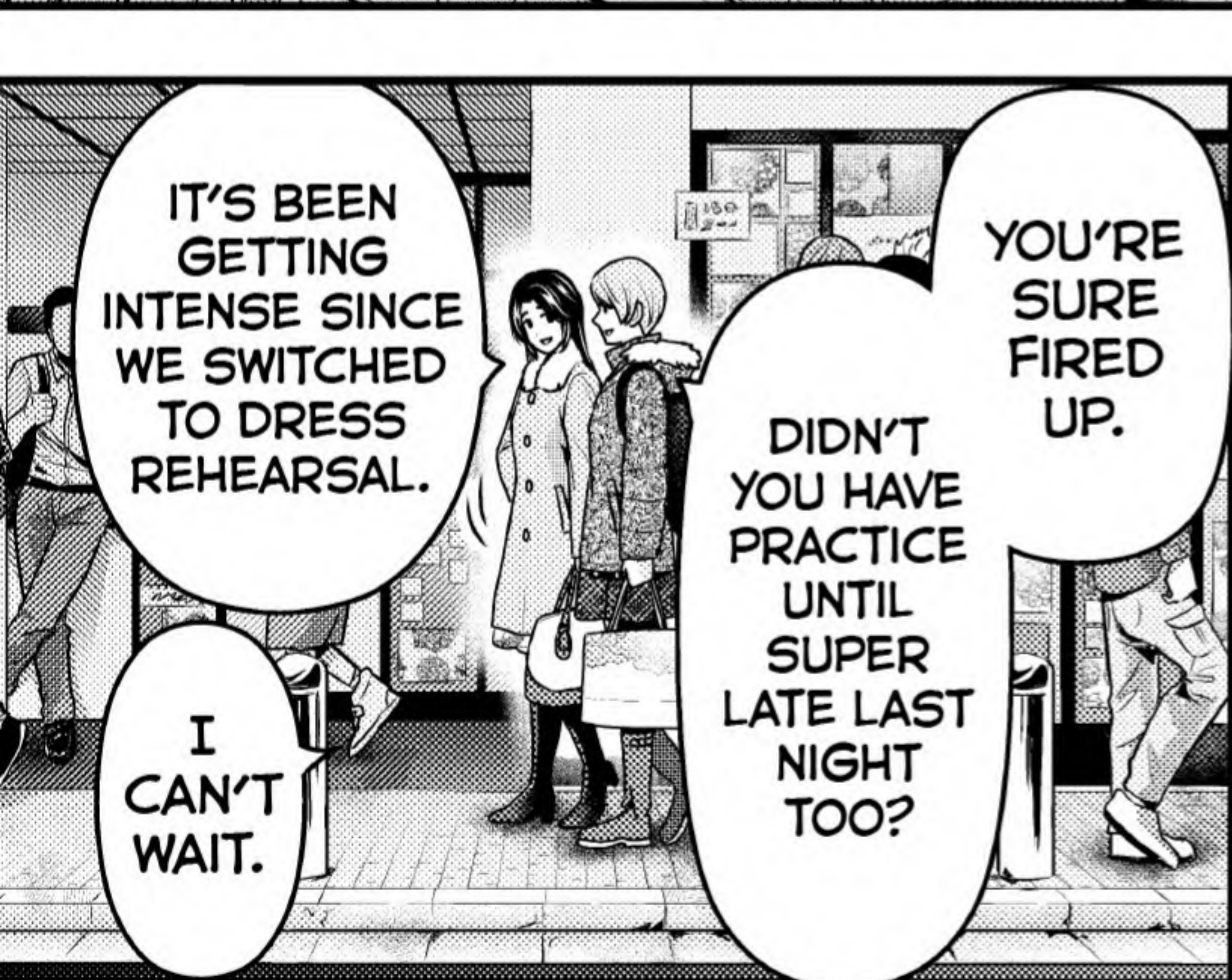
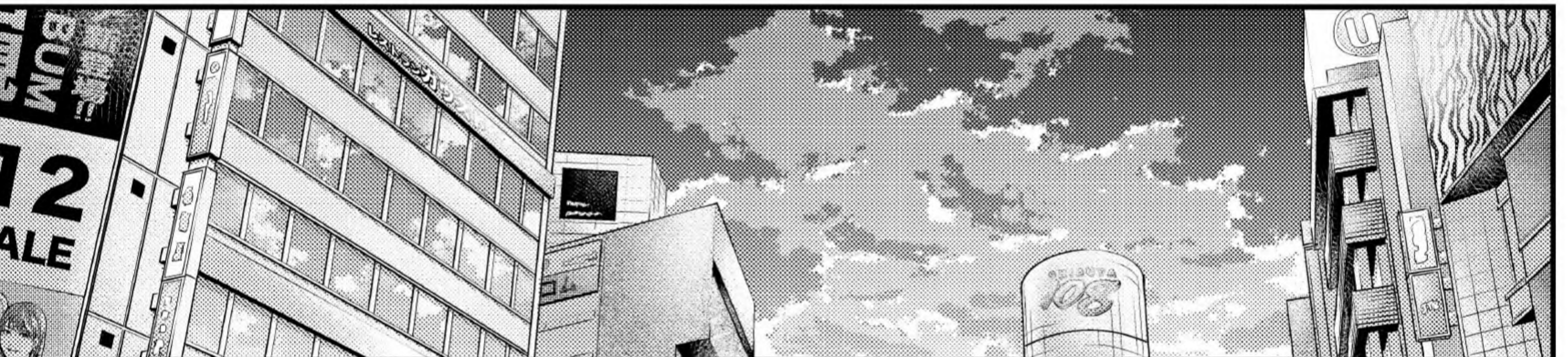


...GET THINGS SQUARED AWAY WITH TSUTAYA-SAN BY THEN, HUH?

GUESS I'D BETTER ...



THANKS A TON!

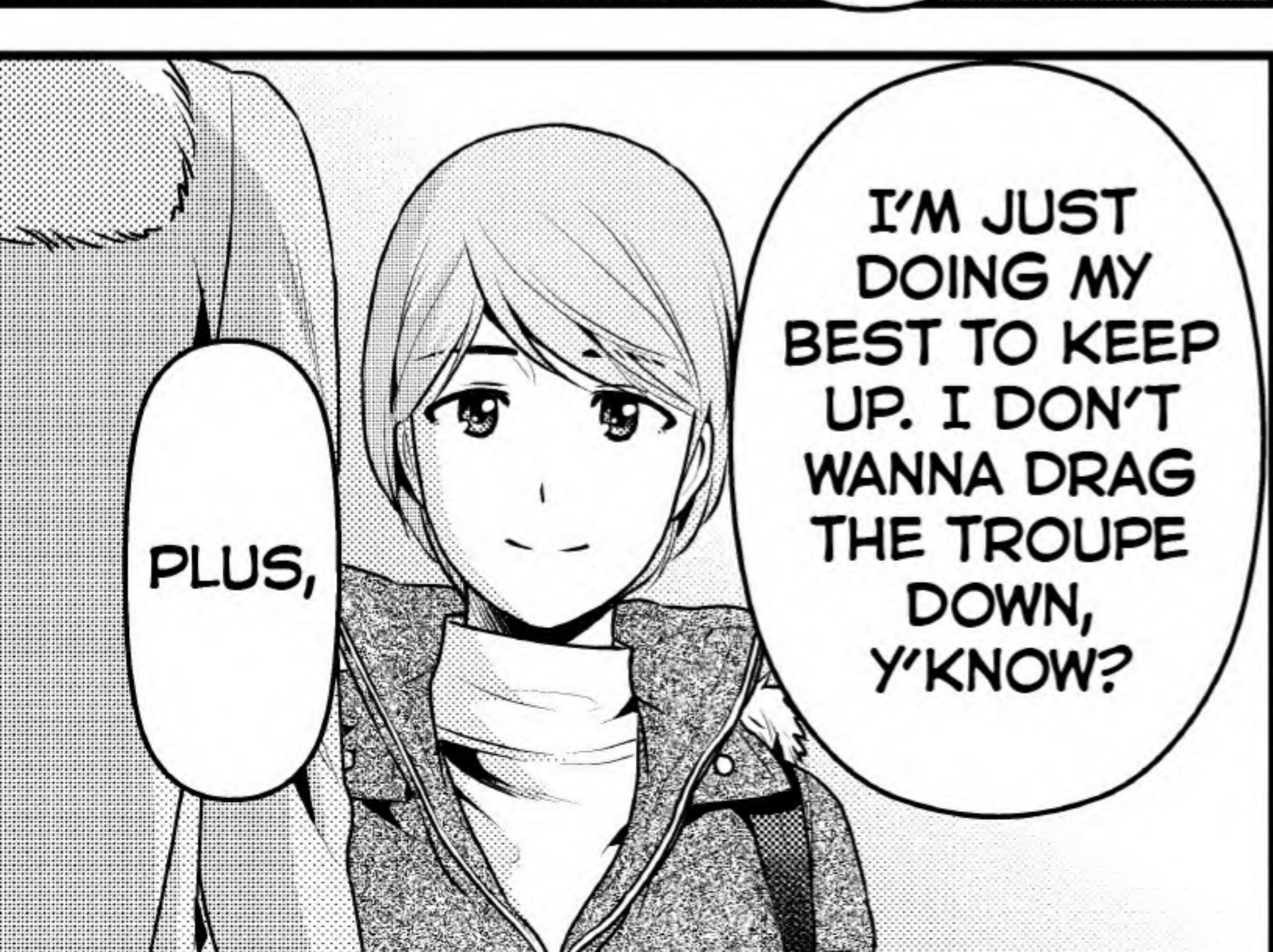


IT'S BEEN GETTING INTENSE SINCE WE SWITCHED TO DRESS REHEARSAL.

I CAN'T WAIT.

DIDN'T YOU HAVE PRACTICE UNTIL SUPER LATE LAST NIGHT TOO?

YOU'RE SURE FIRED UP.



PLUS,

I'M JUST DOING MY BEST TO KEEP UP. I DON'T WANNA DRAG THE TROUPE DOWN, Y'KNOW?



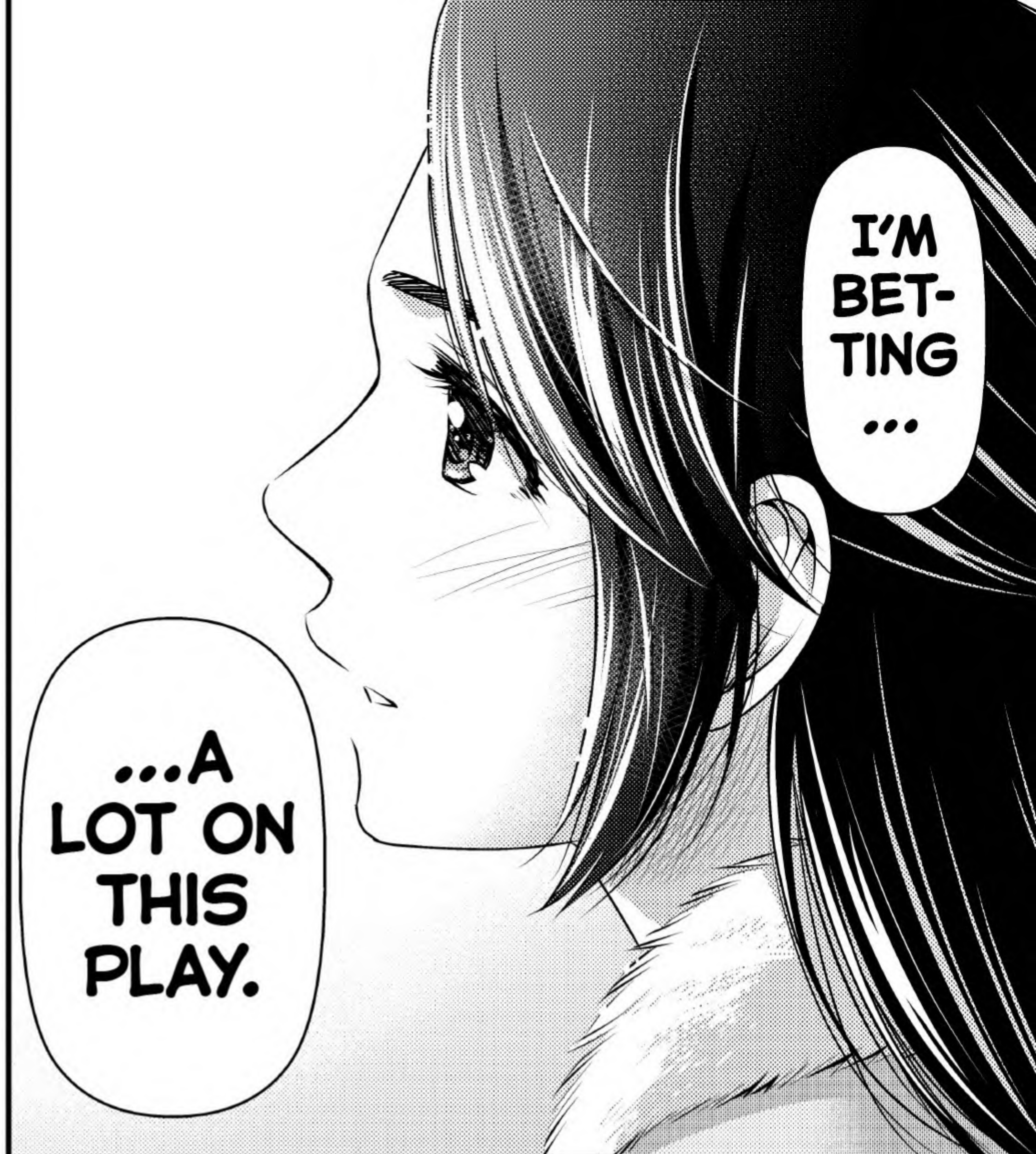
REHEARSAL?

YEAH.

OH, CRAP. THIS LATE ALREADY?

I GOTTA GET GOING.









Isn't your sugar bear gonna visit for Christmas?!

YOU?



WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT.

CHRISTMAS IS, LIKE, THE BUSIEST TIME OF THE YEAR FOR A HOTEL RESTAURANT.

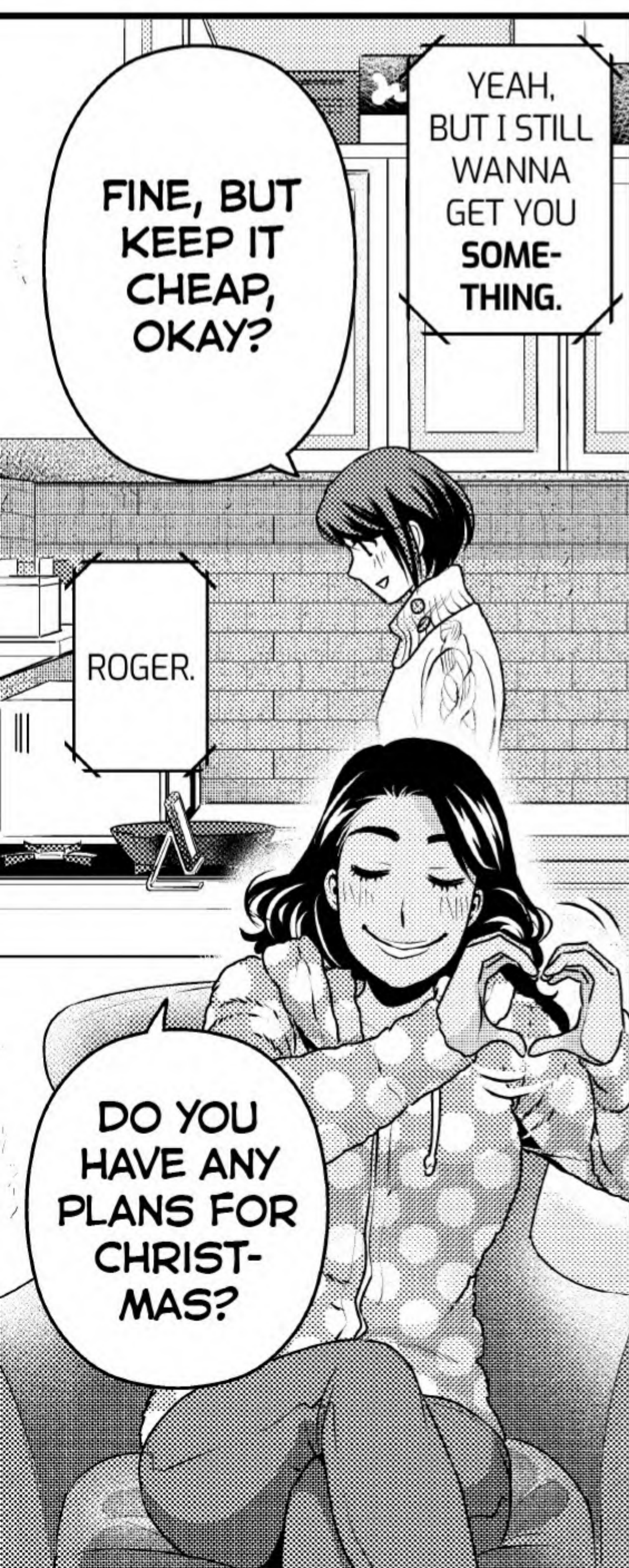


AHH... I'D LOVE TO, BUT I'M BROKE AS A JOKE.

SHE ASKED IF YOU WERE COMING FOR CHRISTMAS.

WHAT'D SHE SAY?

GOTCHA.



FINE, BUT KEEP IT CHEAP, OKAY?

YEAH, BUT I STILL WANNA GET YOU SOMETHING.

ROGER.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS?



I DON'T NEED ANYTHING.

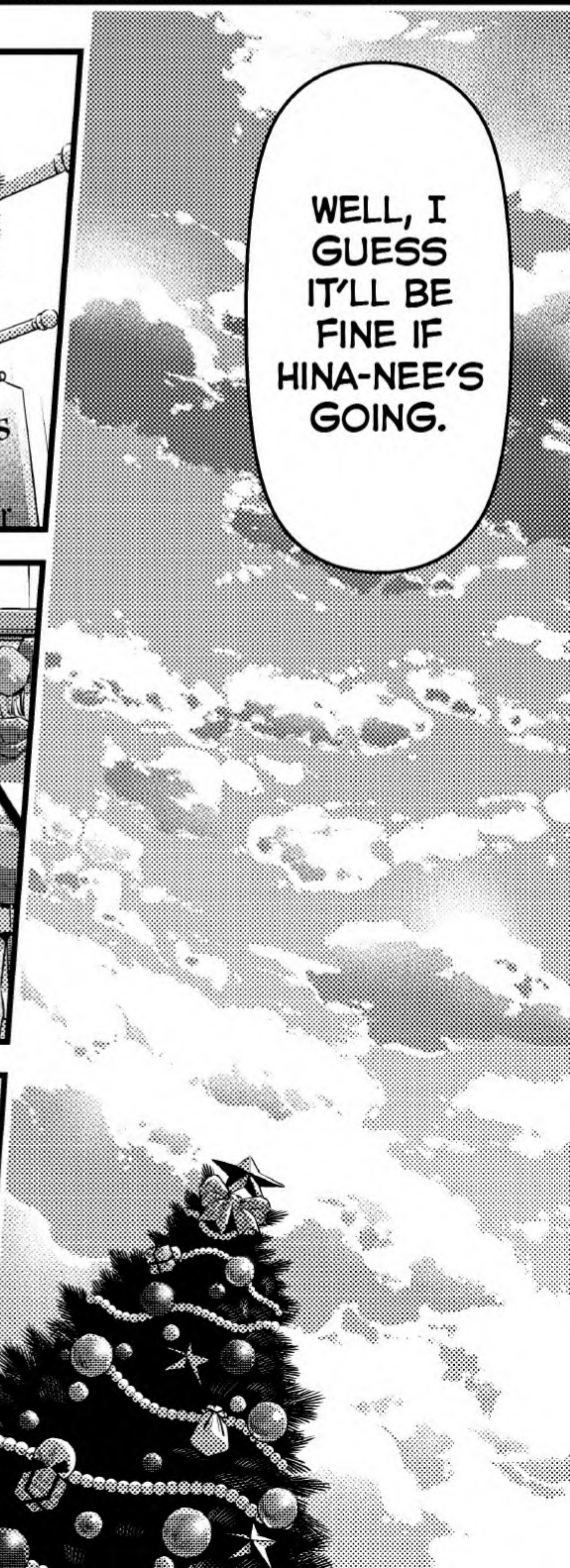
YOU ALREADY GAVE ME THIS NECKLACE BEFORE I LEFT.



I'LL SEND YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING.

ANY REQUESTS?









RIGHT!



RELAX. JUST GO OUT AND DO YOUR THING.



NERVOUS?

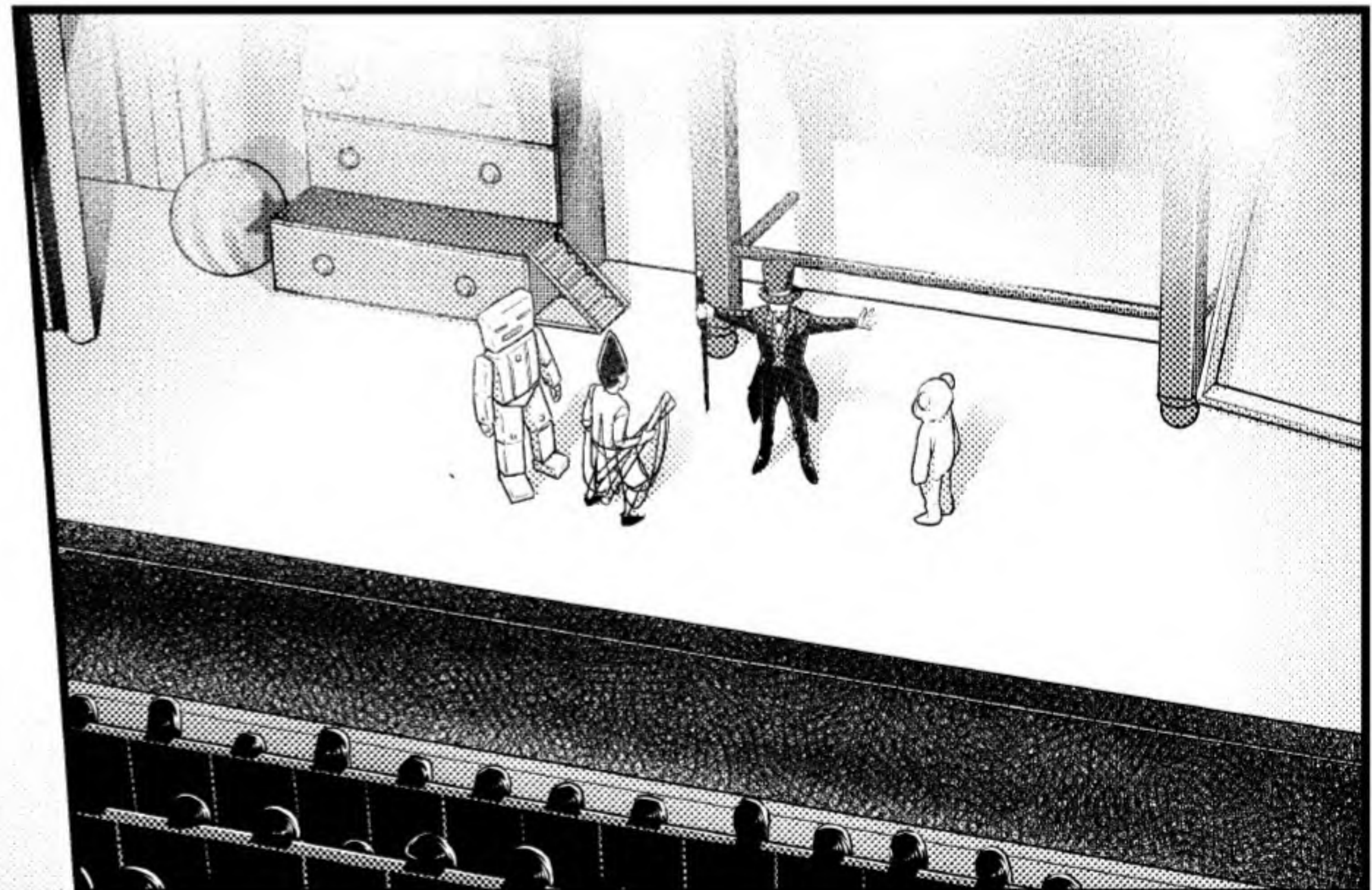


HE'S RIGHT!

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF?!

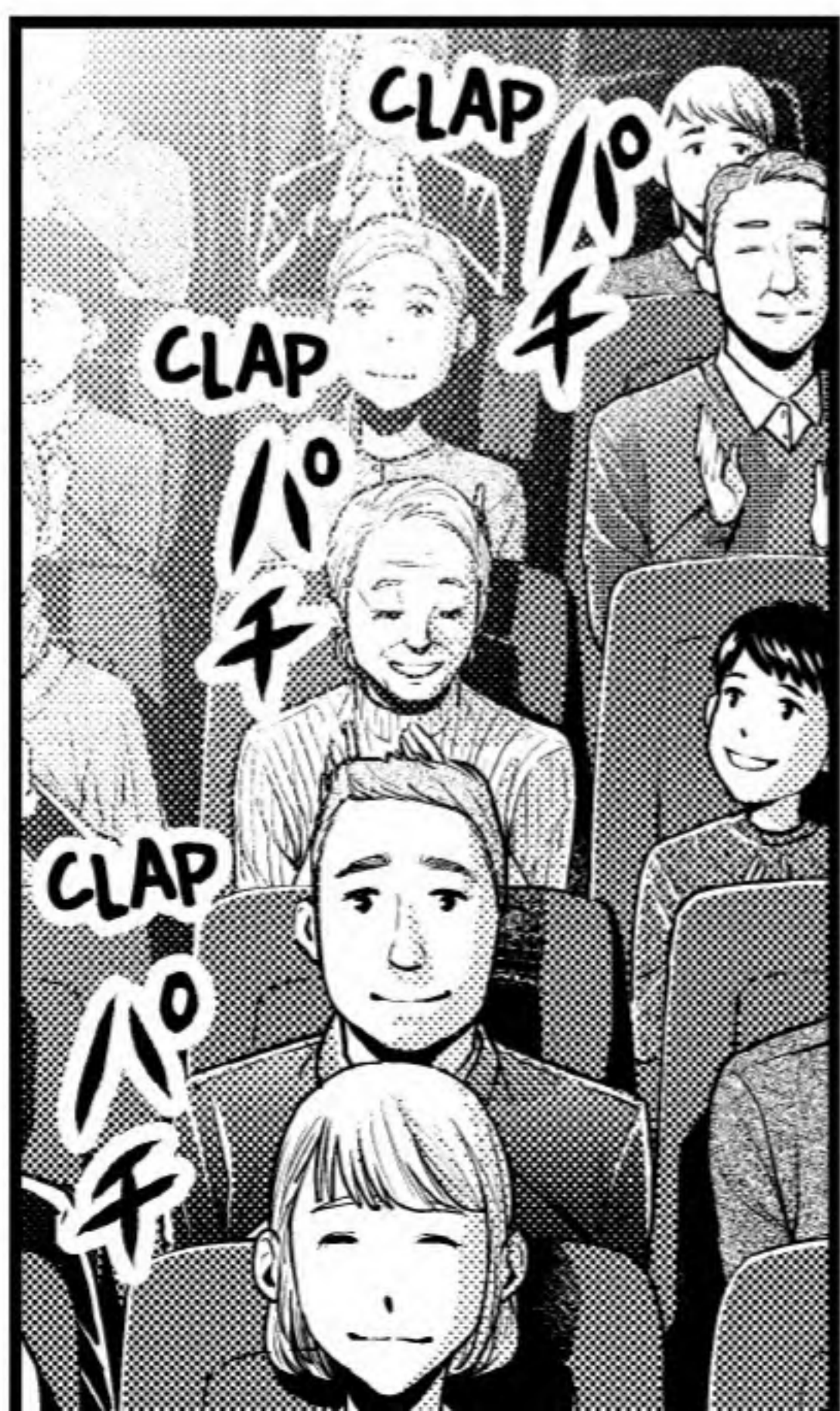
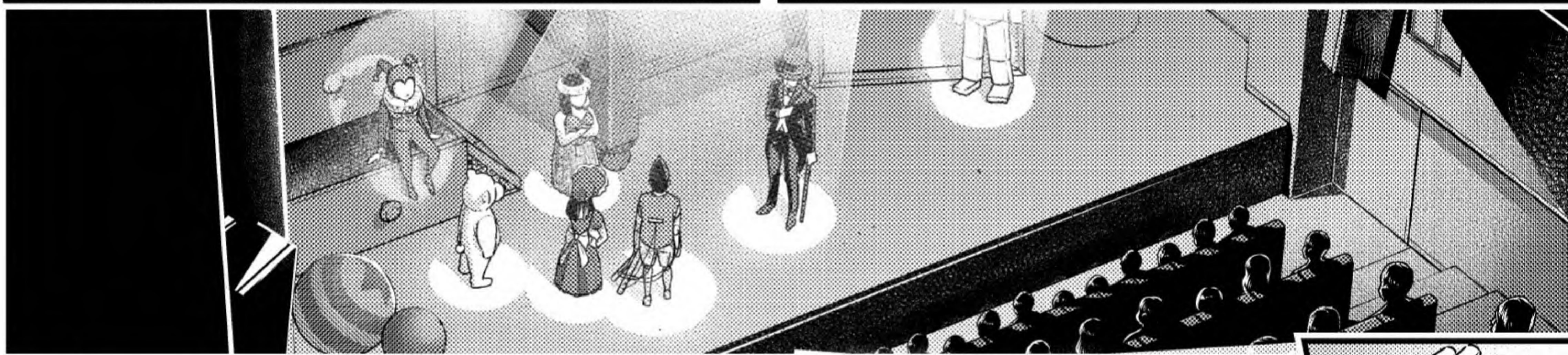
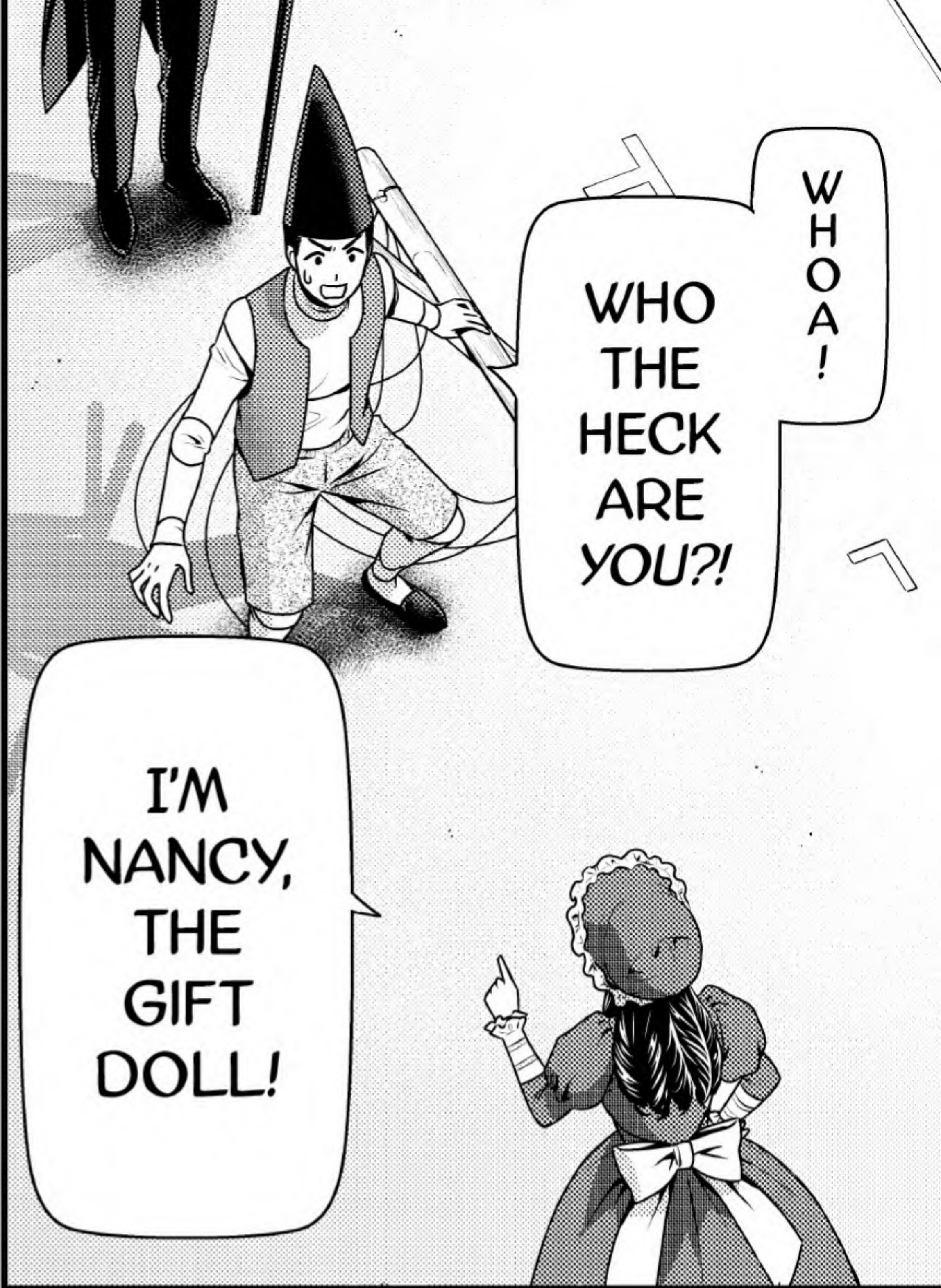
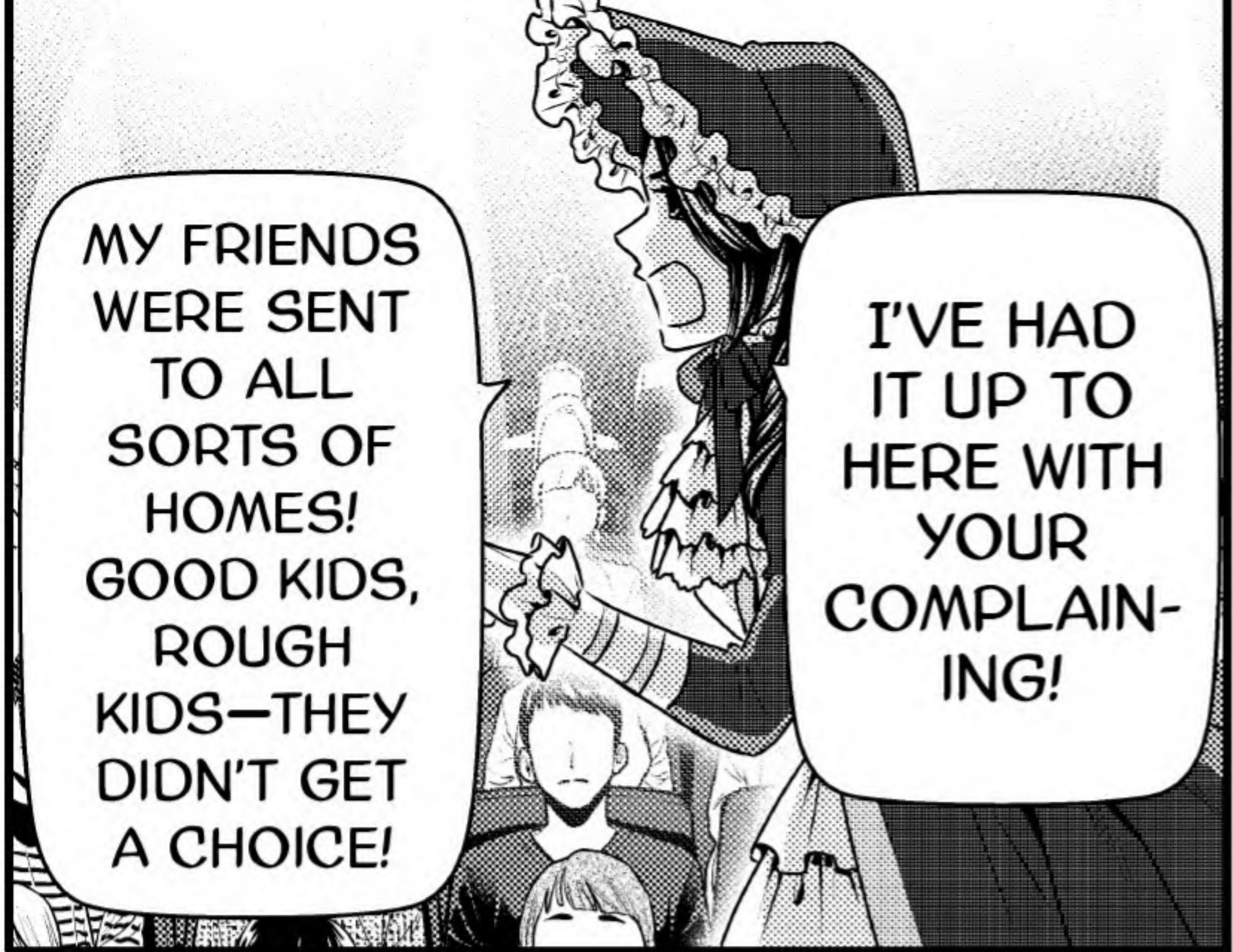


CLAP 10 4 CLAP 10 4 WOOO

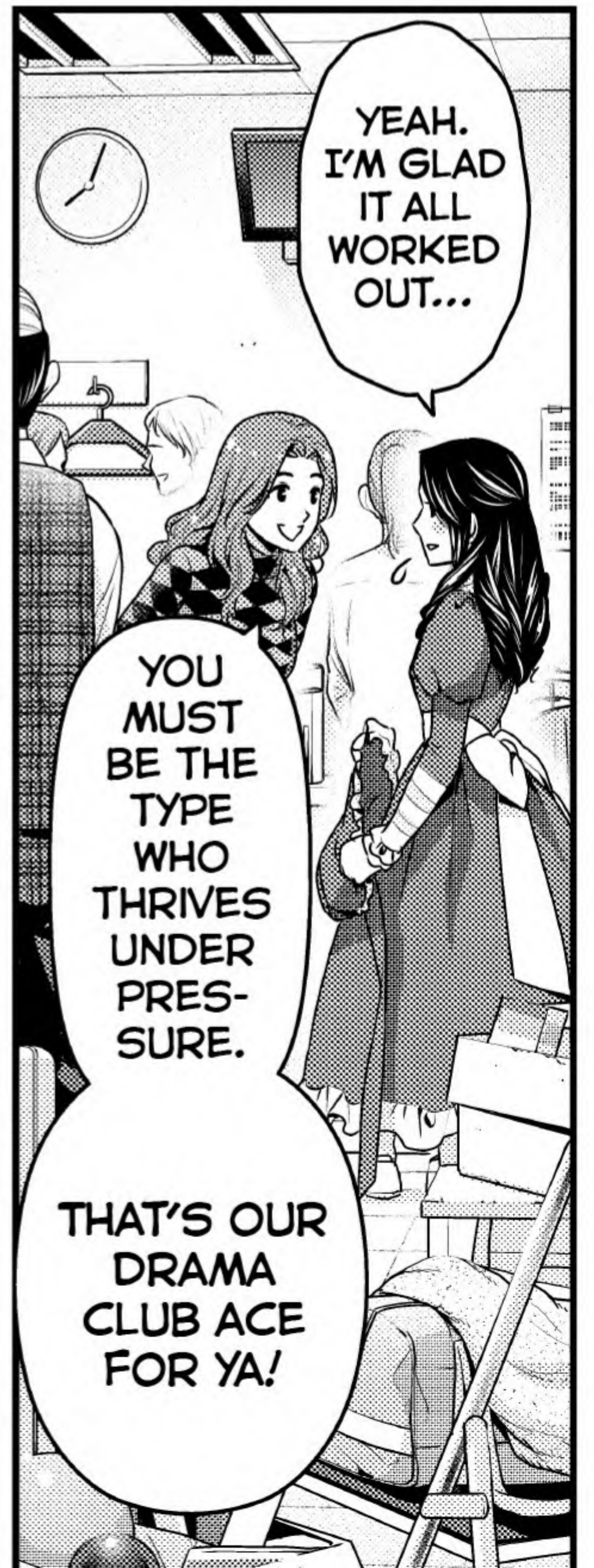
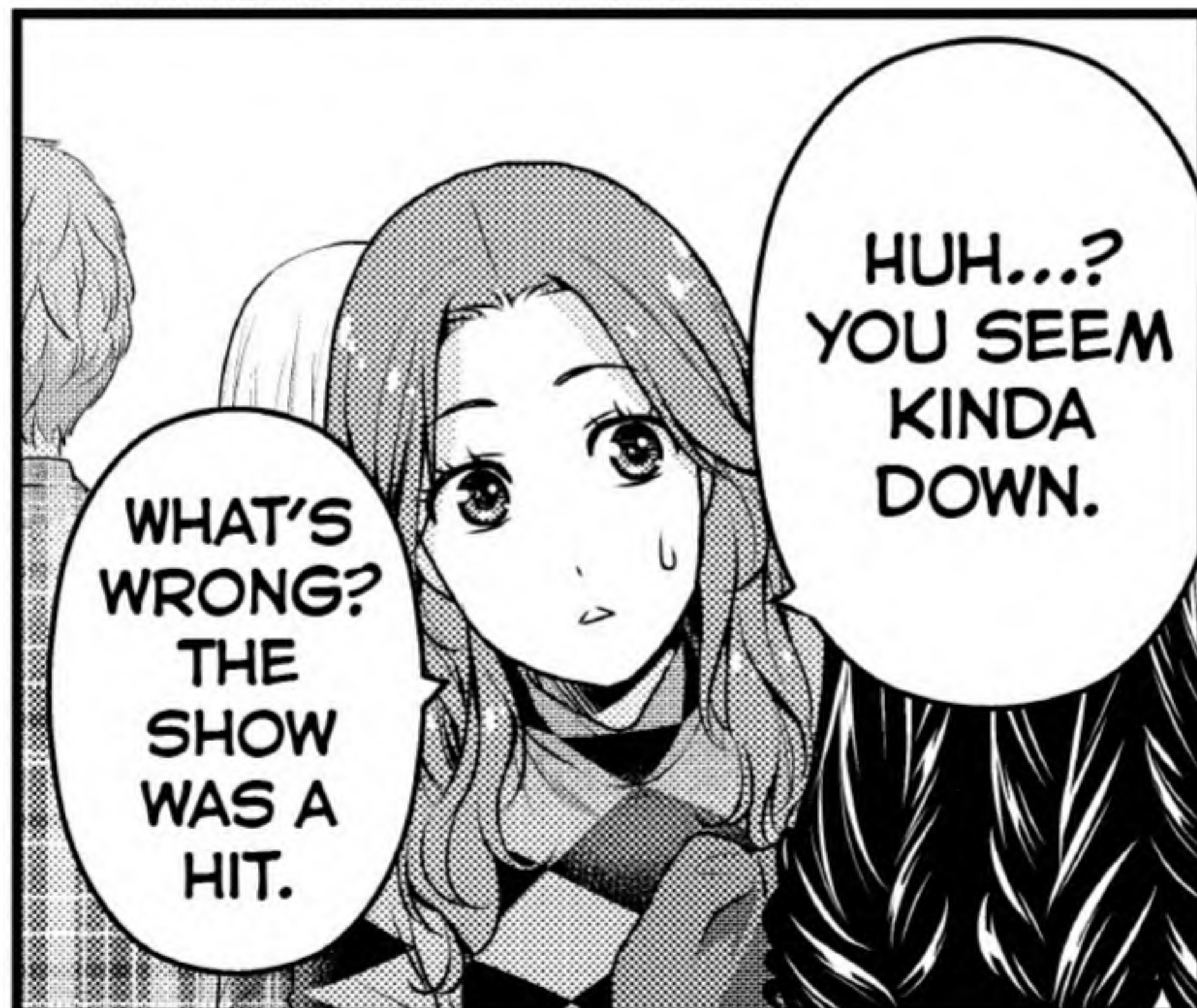
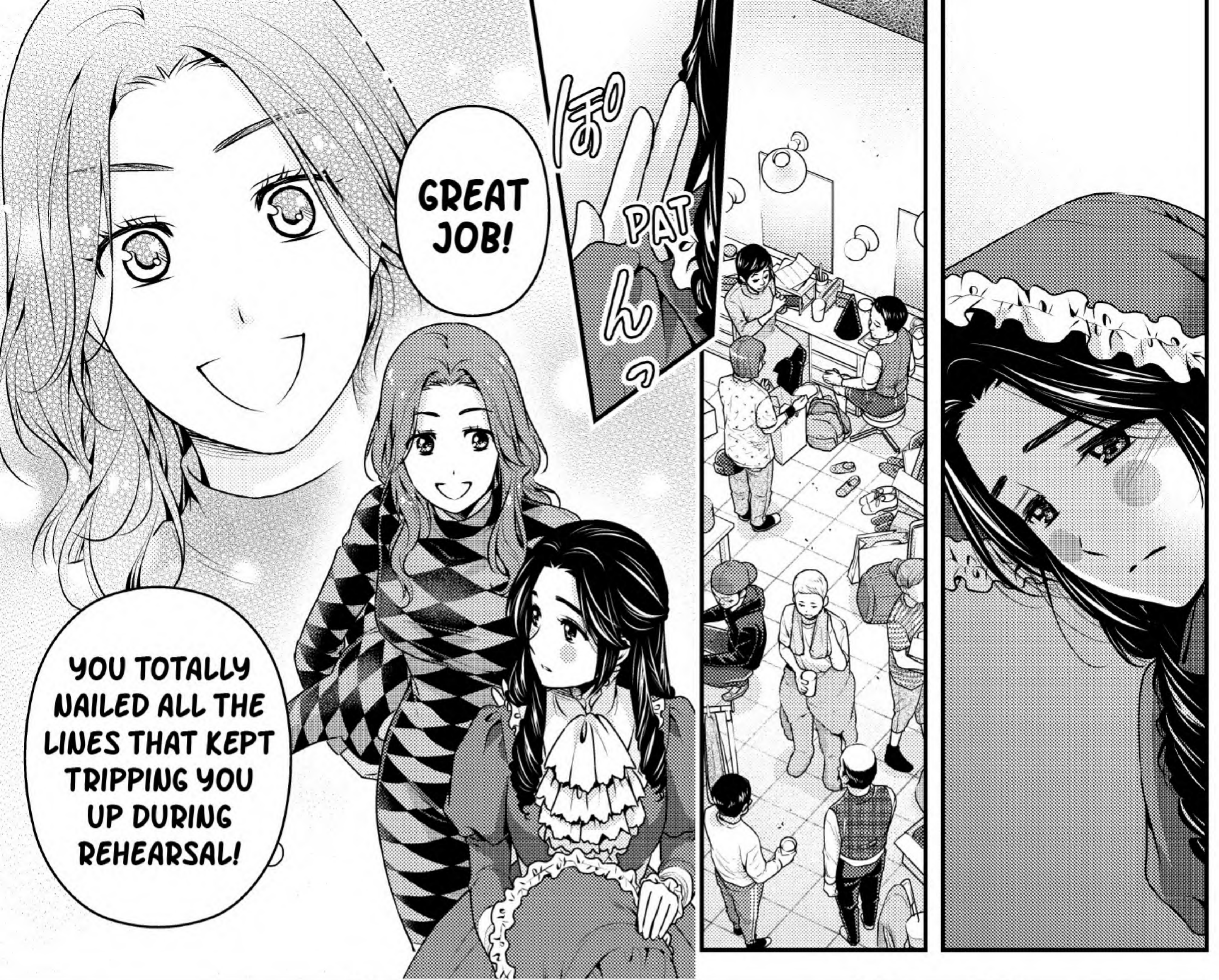


TAP













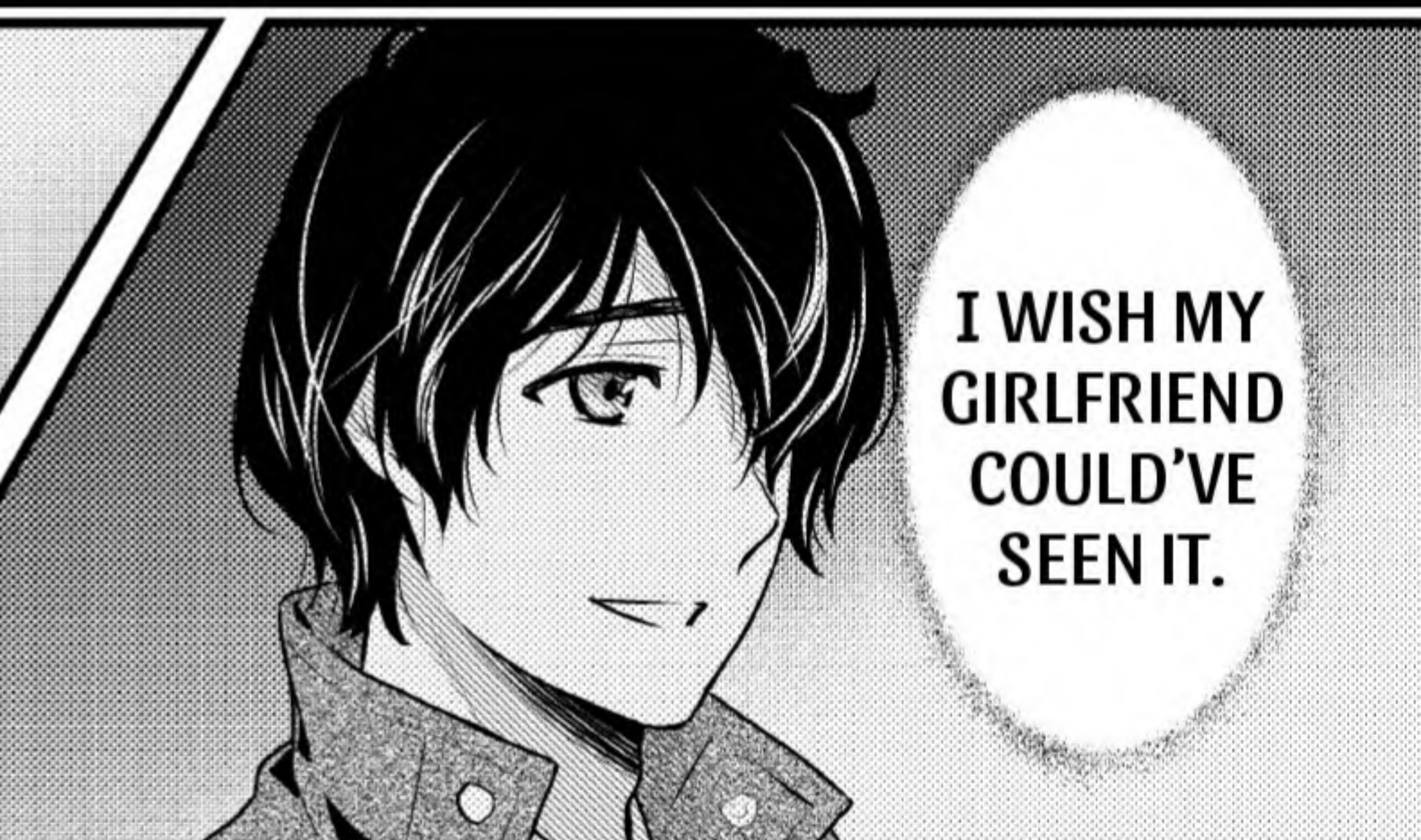




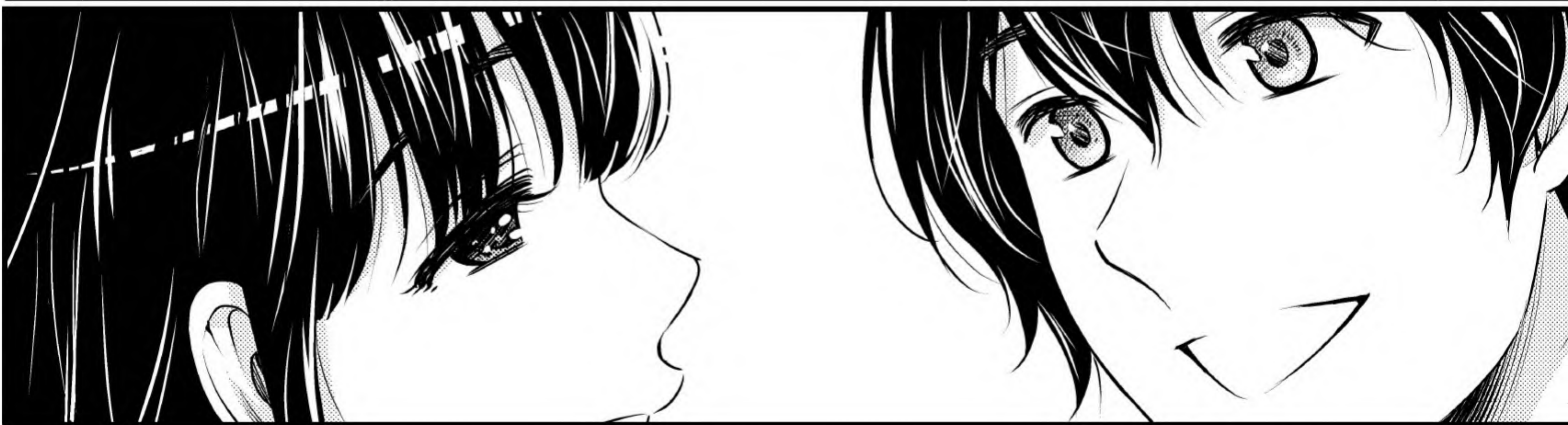




*I WANTED TO BE THERE FOR HIM IN HIS GIRLFRIEND'S STEAD.*

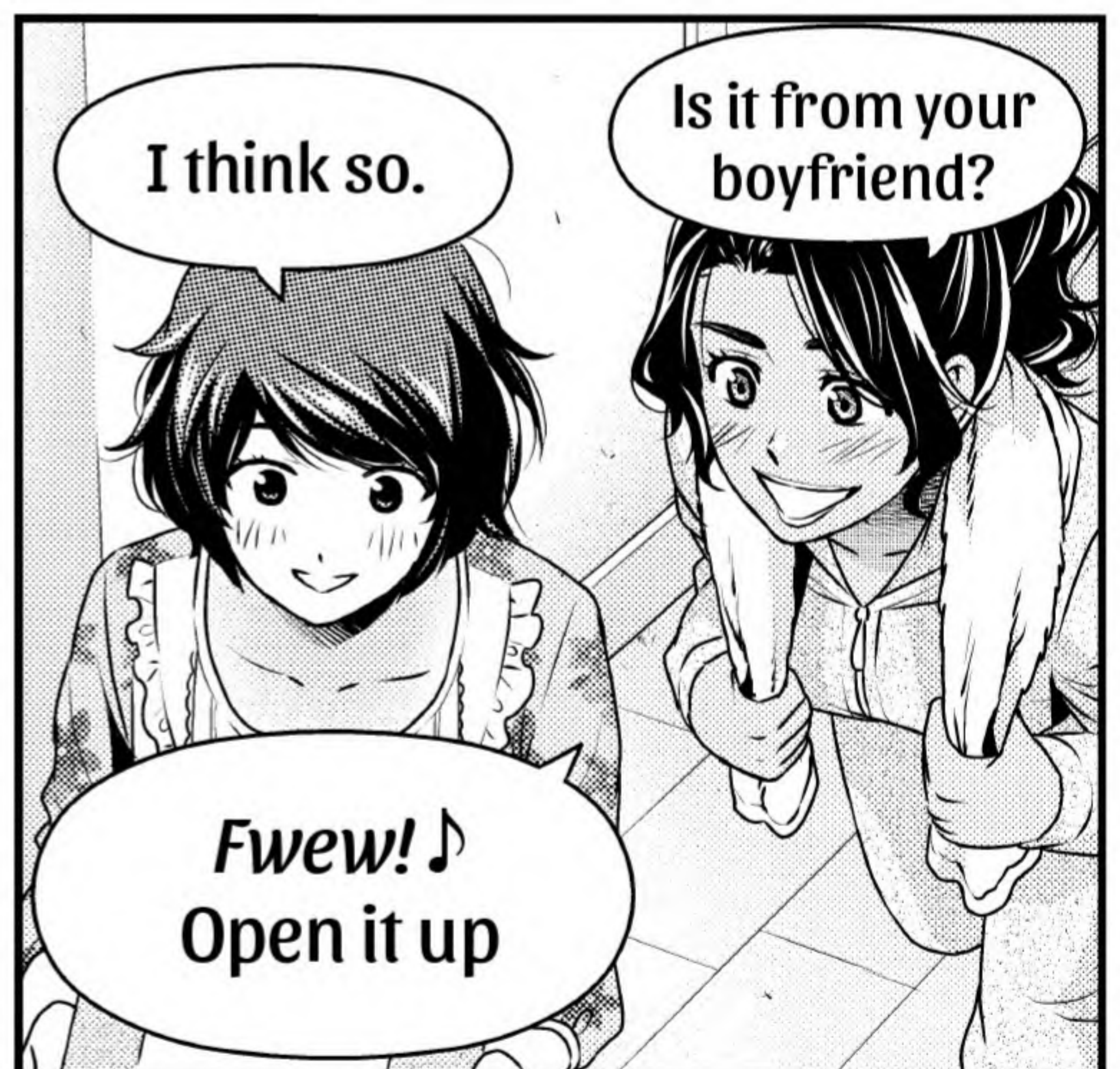
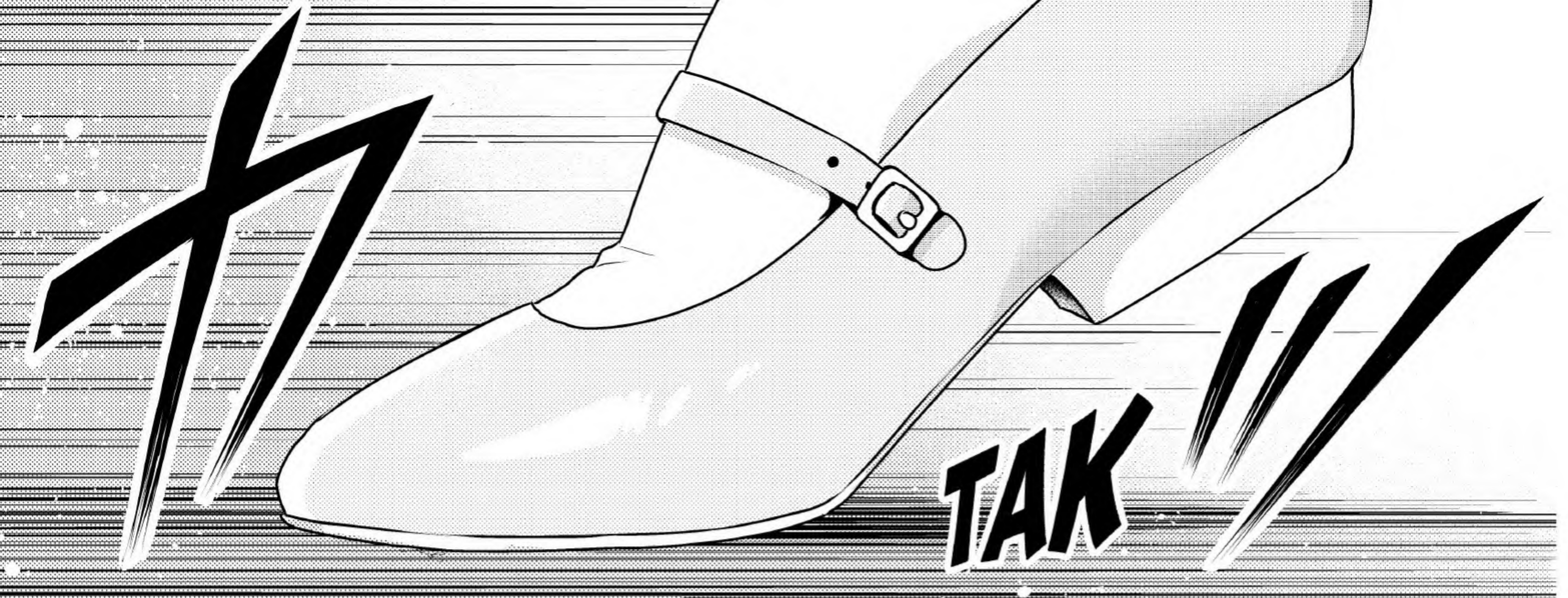


*I PROMISED MYSELF I'D TELL HIM MY FEELINGS IF HE CAME.*



*ISN'T THERE ANY ROOM FOR ME ON YOUR STAGE?*



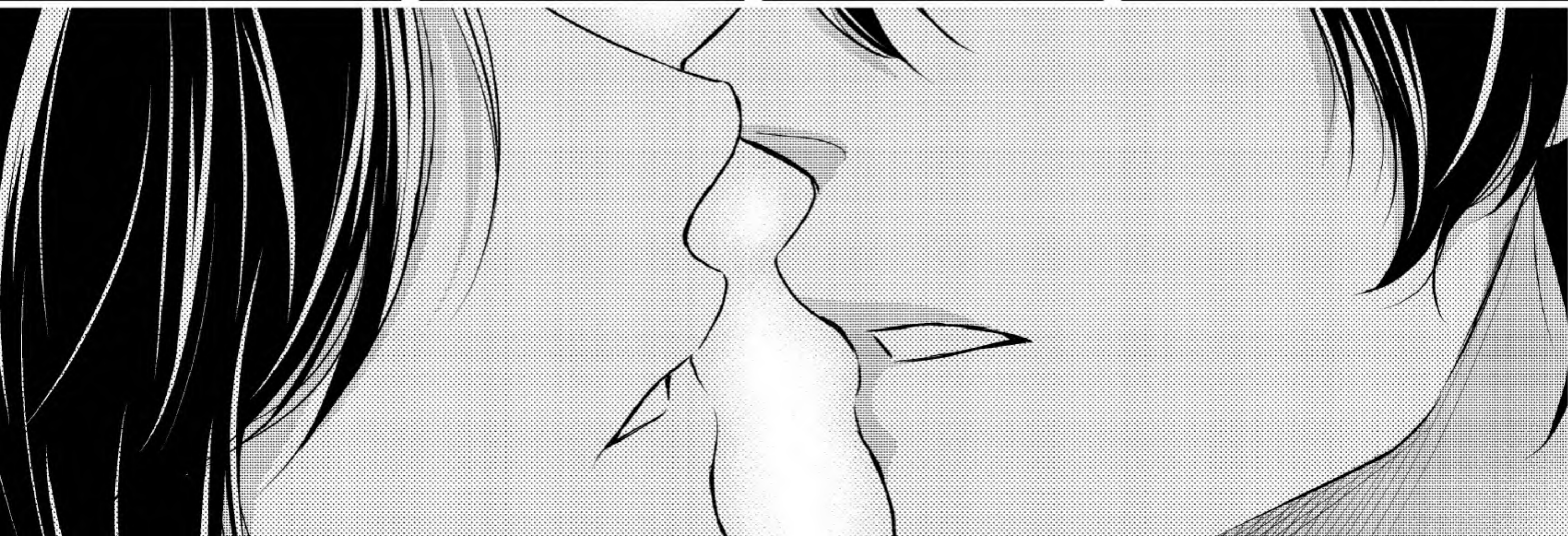
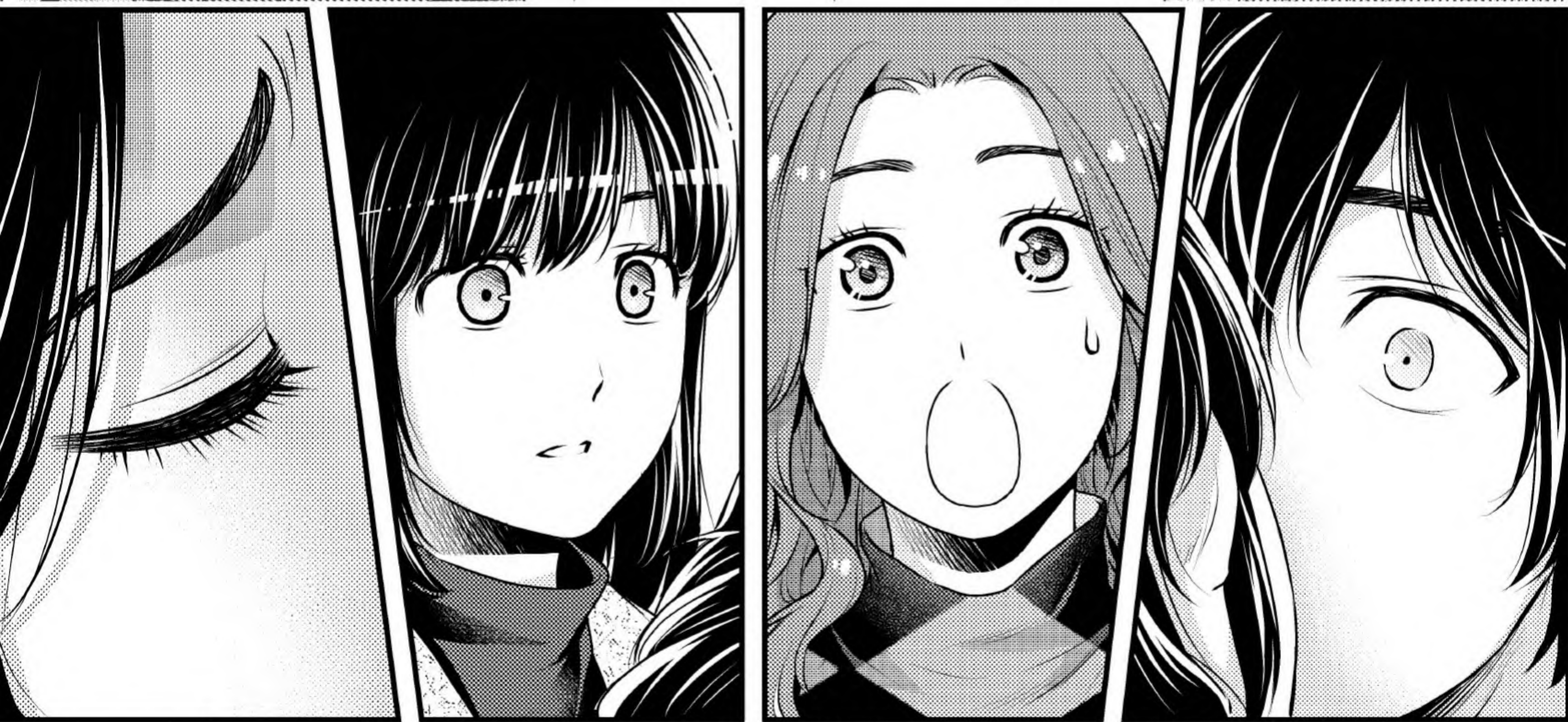




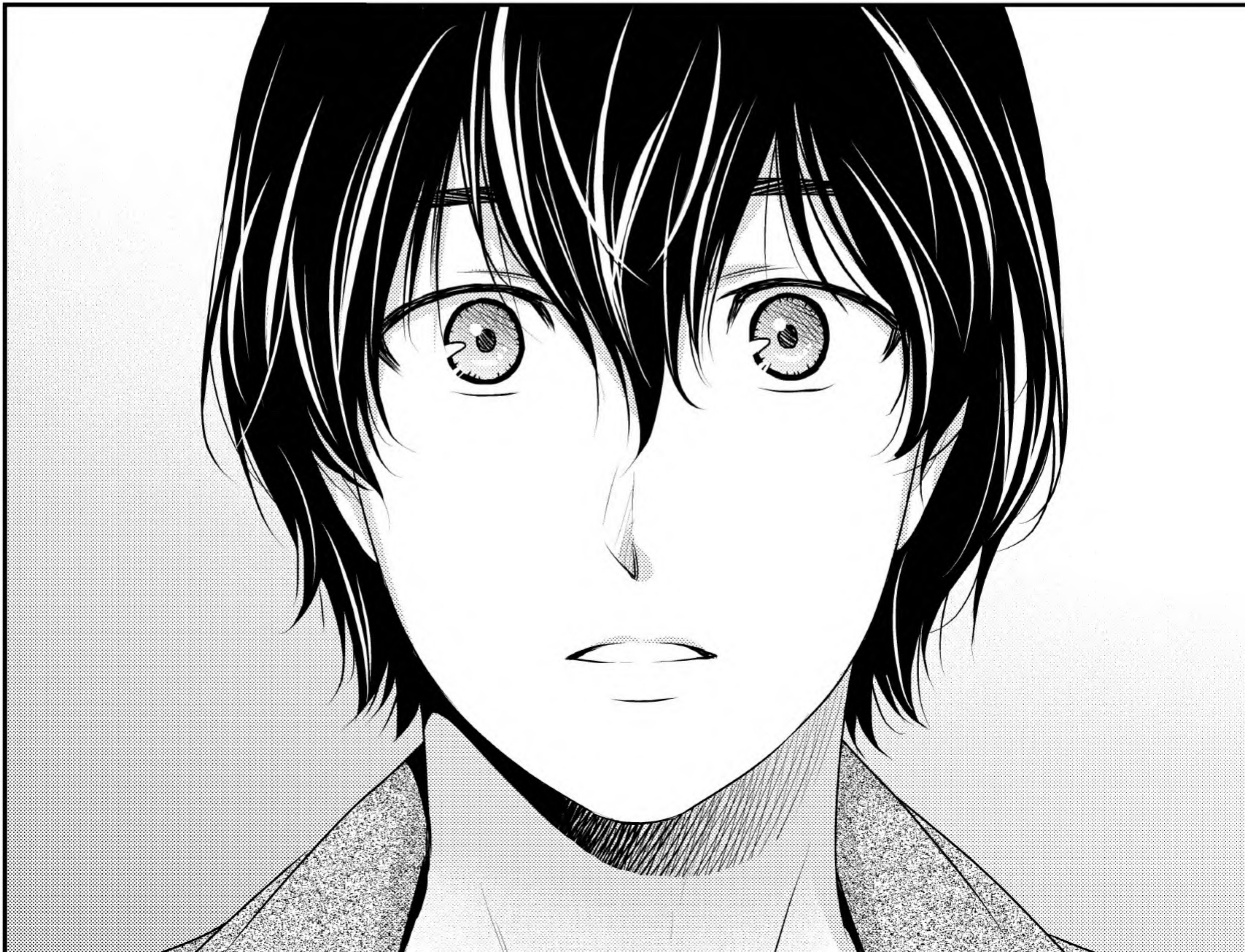




CHAPTER 207: ONE NIGHT IN NEW YORK















I WANTED TO BE  
IN THE SPOTLIGHT  
EVEN IF I HAD  
TO CLAW MY WAY  
THERE.

WHAT A JOKE. I DON'T  
EVEN KNOW HOW TO  
GET ON STAGE.



SIGN: GREENROOM A



...YOU  
AND  
MIYABI-  
CHAN  
WERE AN  
ITEM?



HA  
HA...

WHAT  
WAS  
THAT ALL  
ABOUT,  
HUH?

WAIT.

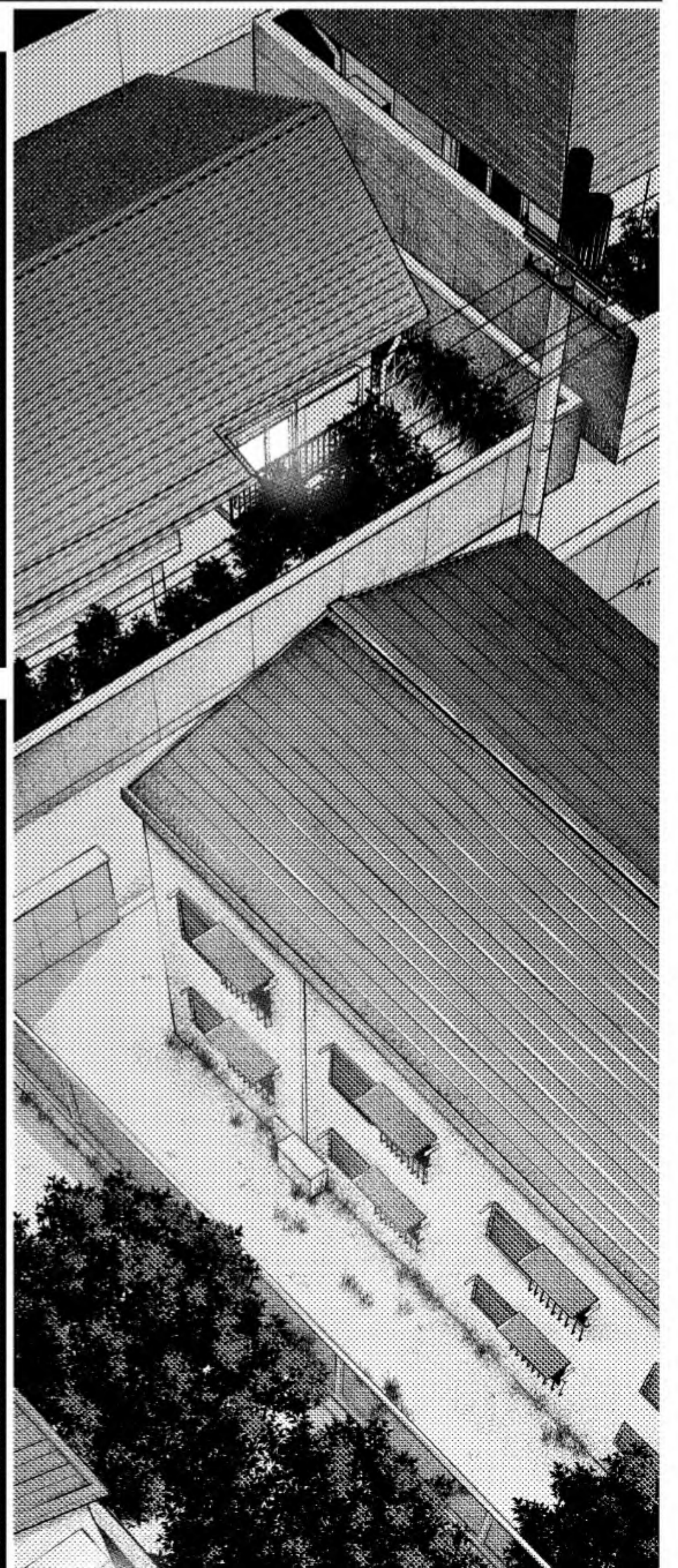
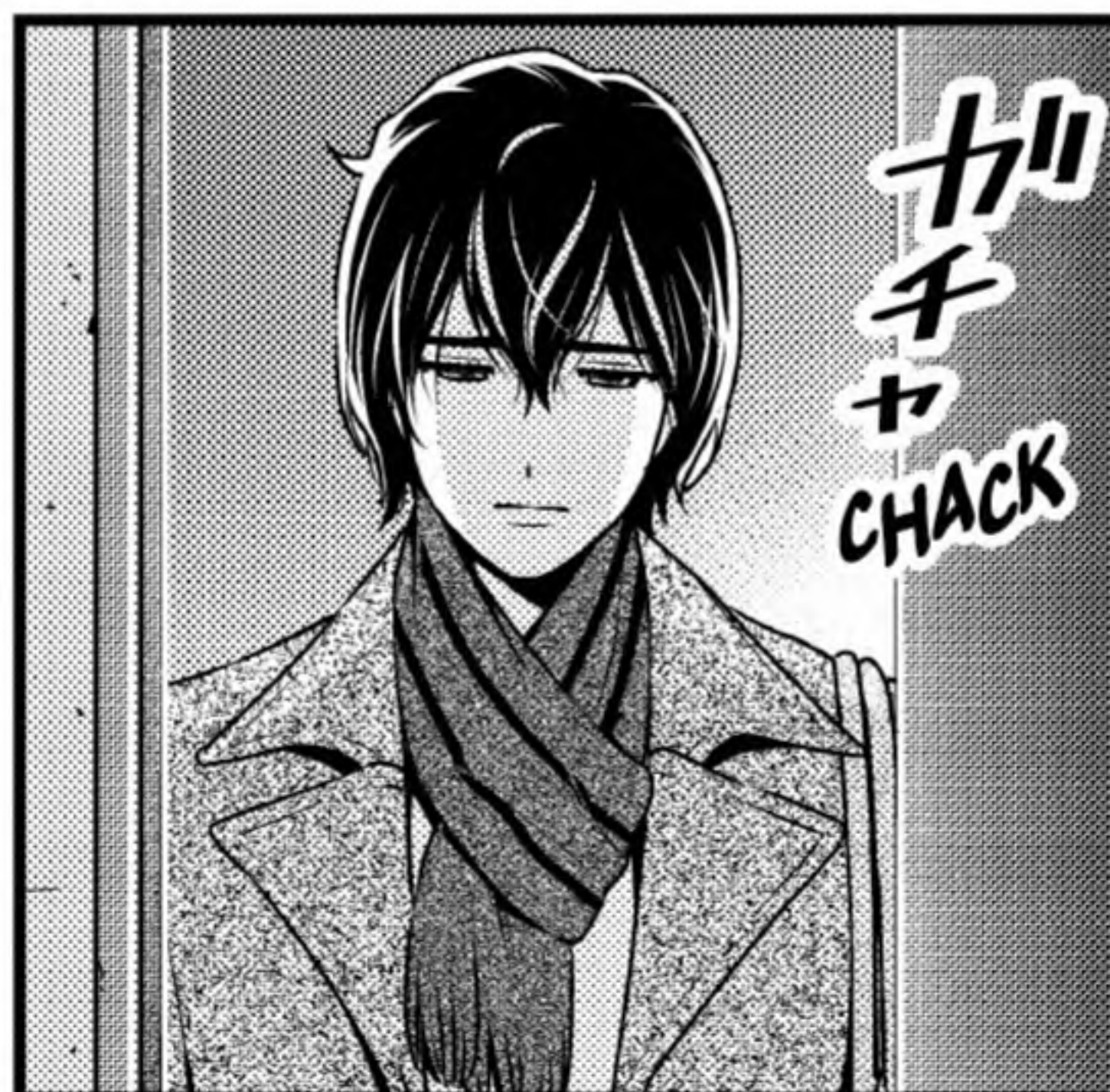
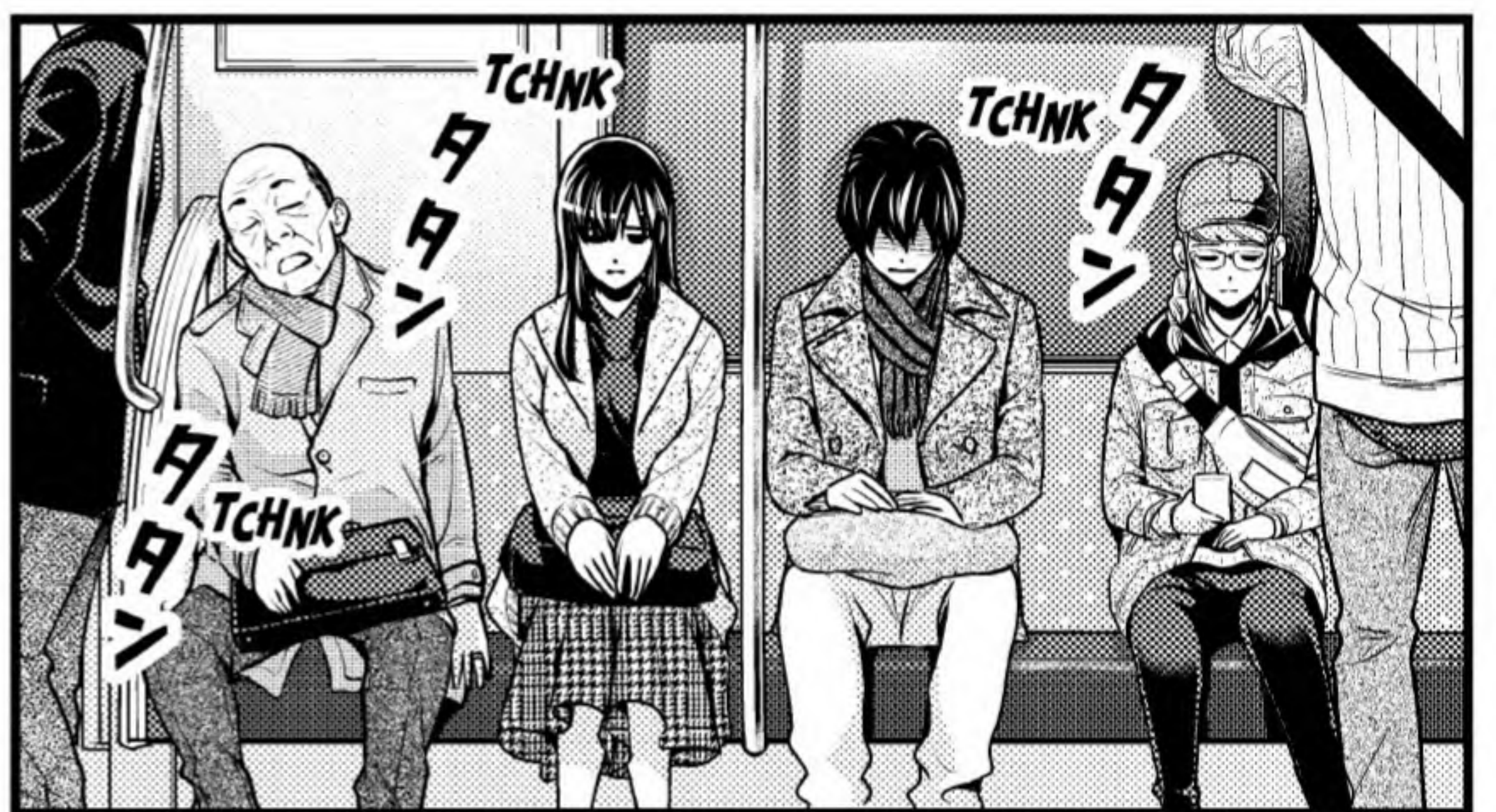
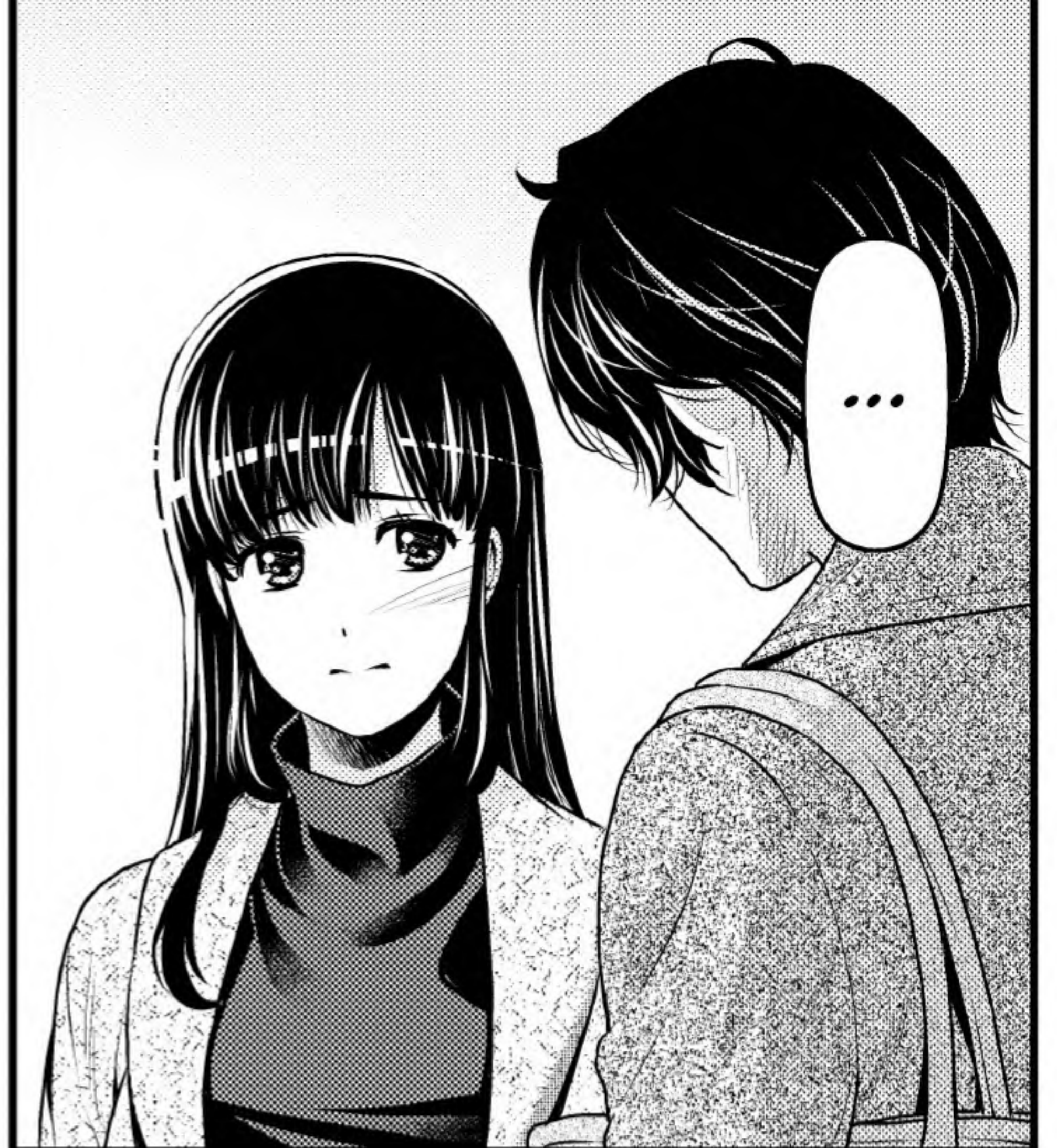
DON'T  
TELL  
ME...

JUST  
FORGET  
IT.



I DON'T  
CARE  
WHAT  
HAPPENS  
ANY-  
MORE!









I KNOW YOUR DEBUT RELEASE WAS KIND OF A MESS, BUT READ ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE BOOKS AND TRY TO CHEER UP, OKAY?

SO I JUST PACKED A BUNCH OF STUFF.

I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO GET YOU, BUT I FIGURED SOMETHING BOOK-RELATED WOULD BE SAFE,



TO NAT-SUO,

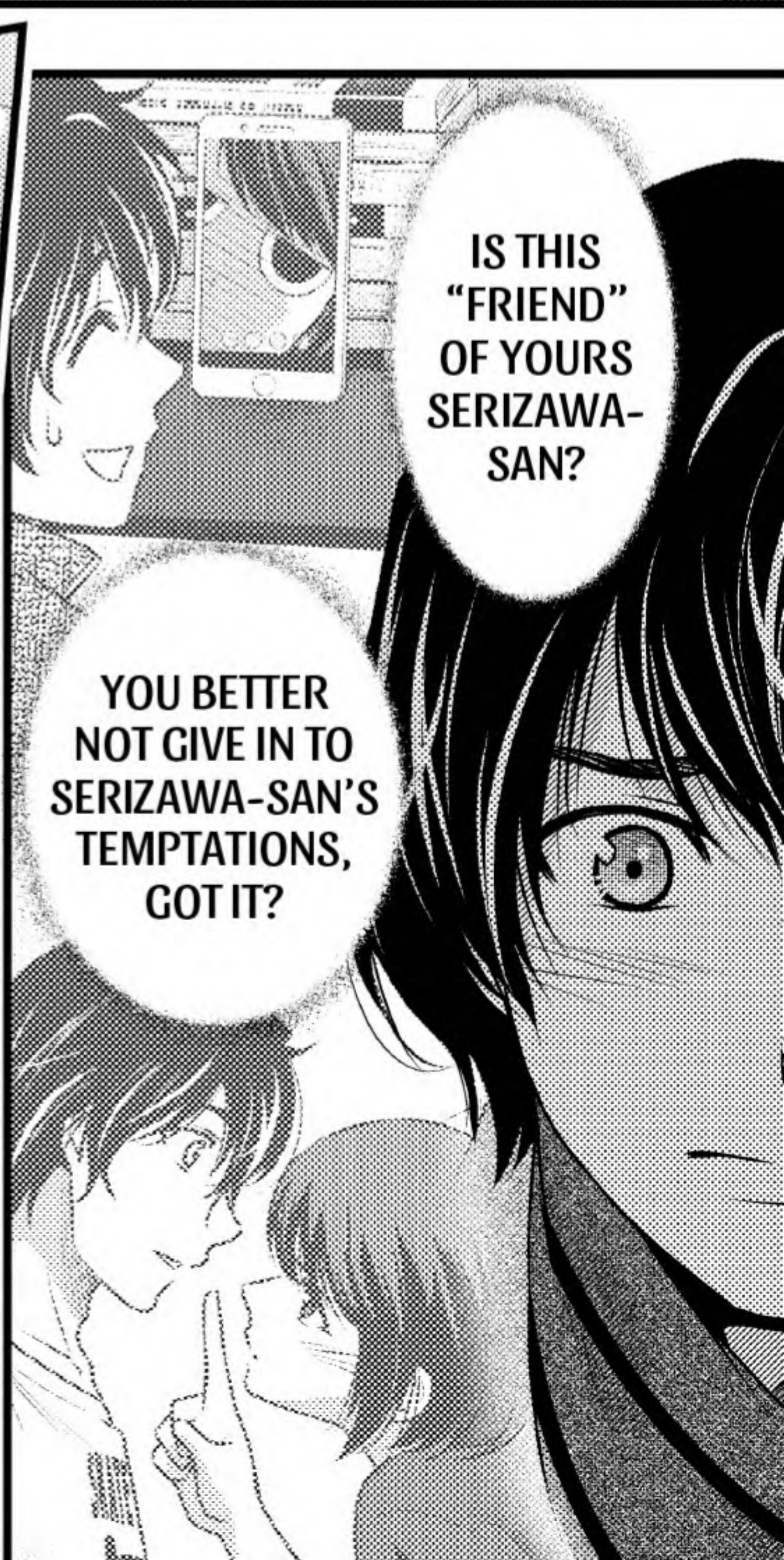
MERRY CHRISTMAS.



WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING?!



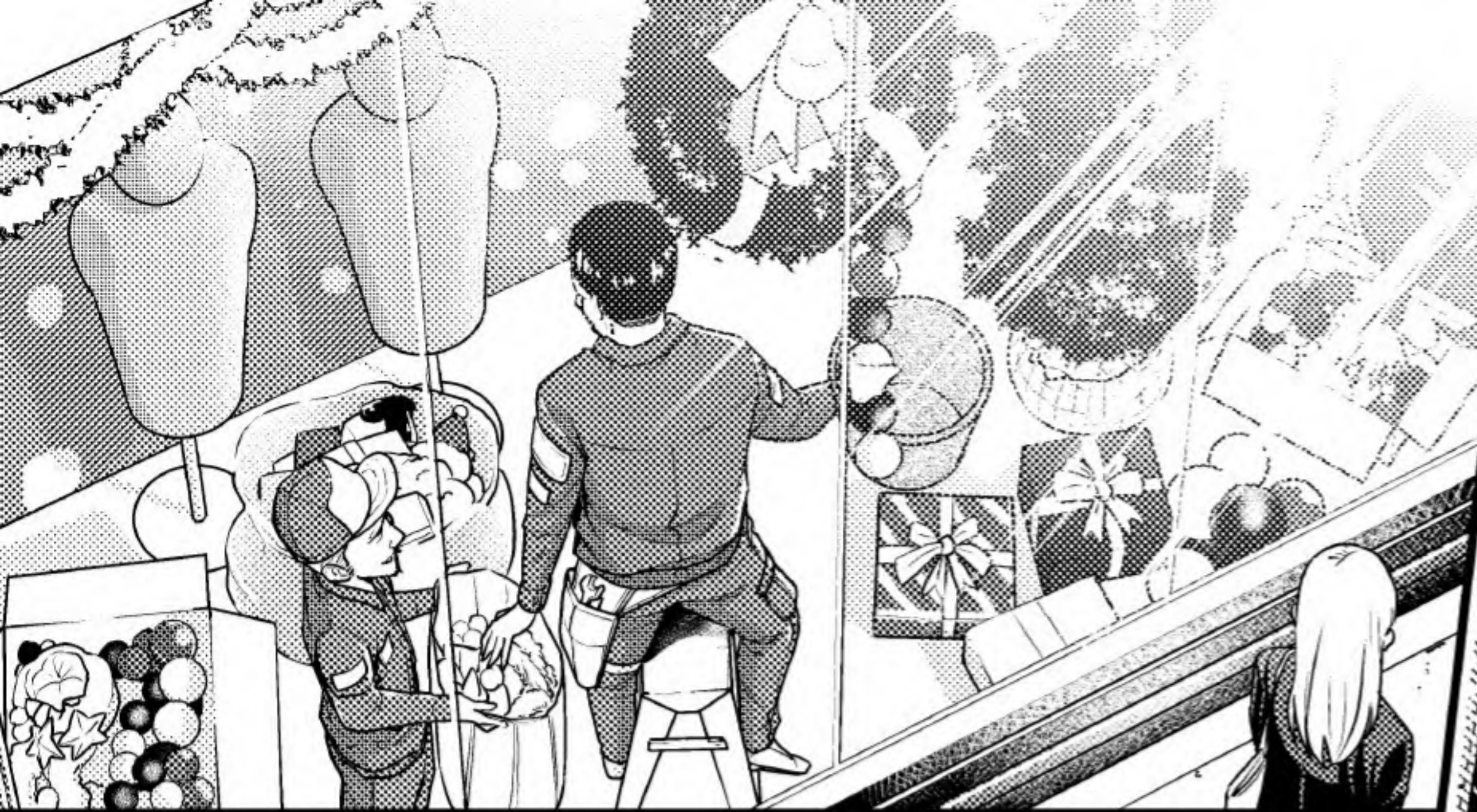
RUI KNEW, BUT...



IS THIS "FRIEND" OF YOURS SERIZAWA-SAN?

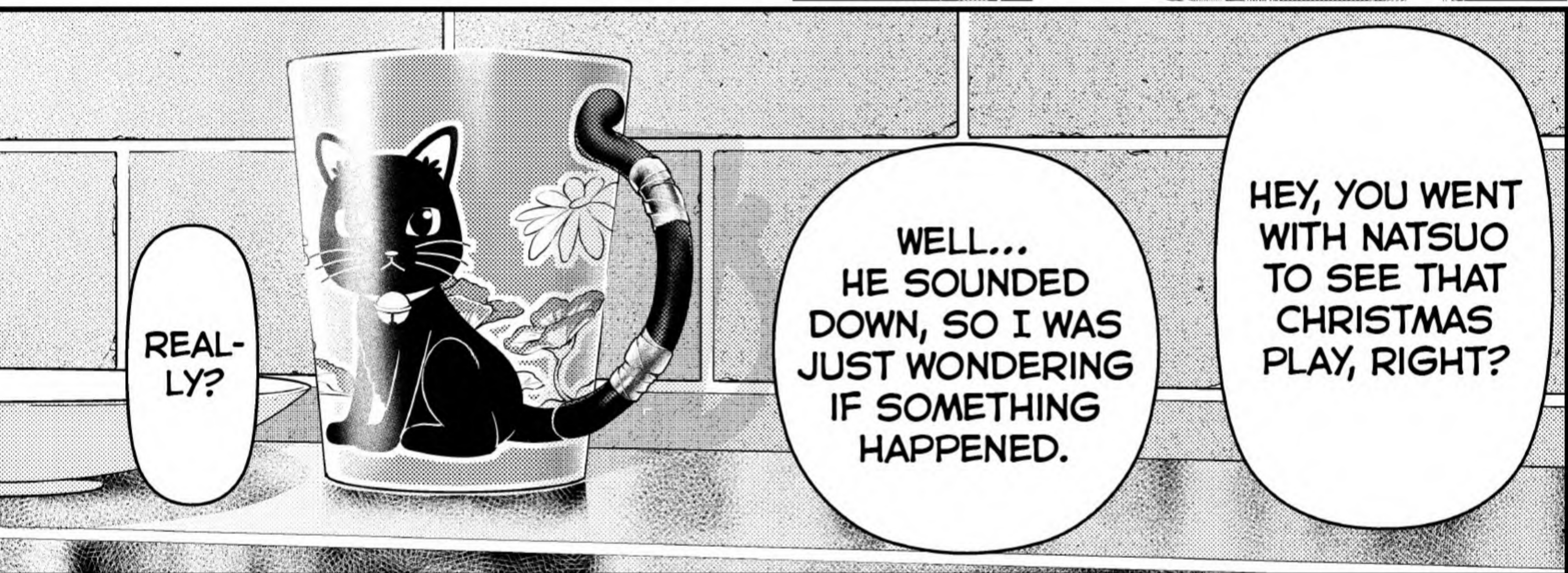
YOU BETTER NOT GIVE IN TO SERIZAWA-SAN'S TEMPTATIONS, GOT IT?





IT'S  
ME.

OH,  
HINA-  
NEE?



REAL-  
LY?

WELL...  
HE SOUNDED  
DOWN, SO I WAS  
JUST WONDERING  
IF SOMETHING  
HAPPENED.

HEY, YOU WENT  
WITH NATSUO  
TO SEE THAT  
CHRISTMAS  
PLAY, RIGHT?



Hmm.  
That doesn't  
add up.

God, this is why  
long-distance  
relationships suck  
so much.



What's up?  
Why the long face?

Oh, it's just...  
my boyfriend's been  
kinda depressed ever  
since Christmas.

I asked my sister if  
she knew anything,  
but it doesn't sound like  
anything happened in  
particular.



HM.

OKAY.  
THANKS.

C'mon, Rui.  
We gotta go, girl.



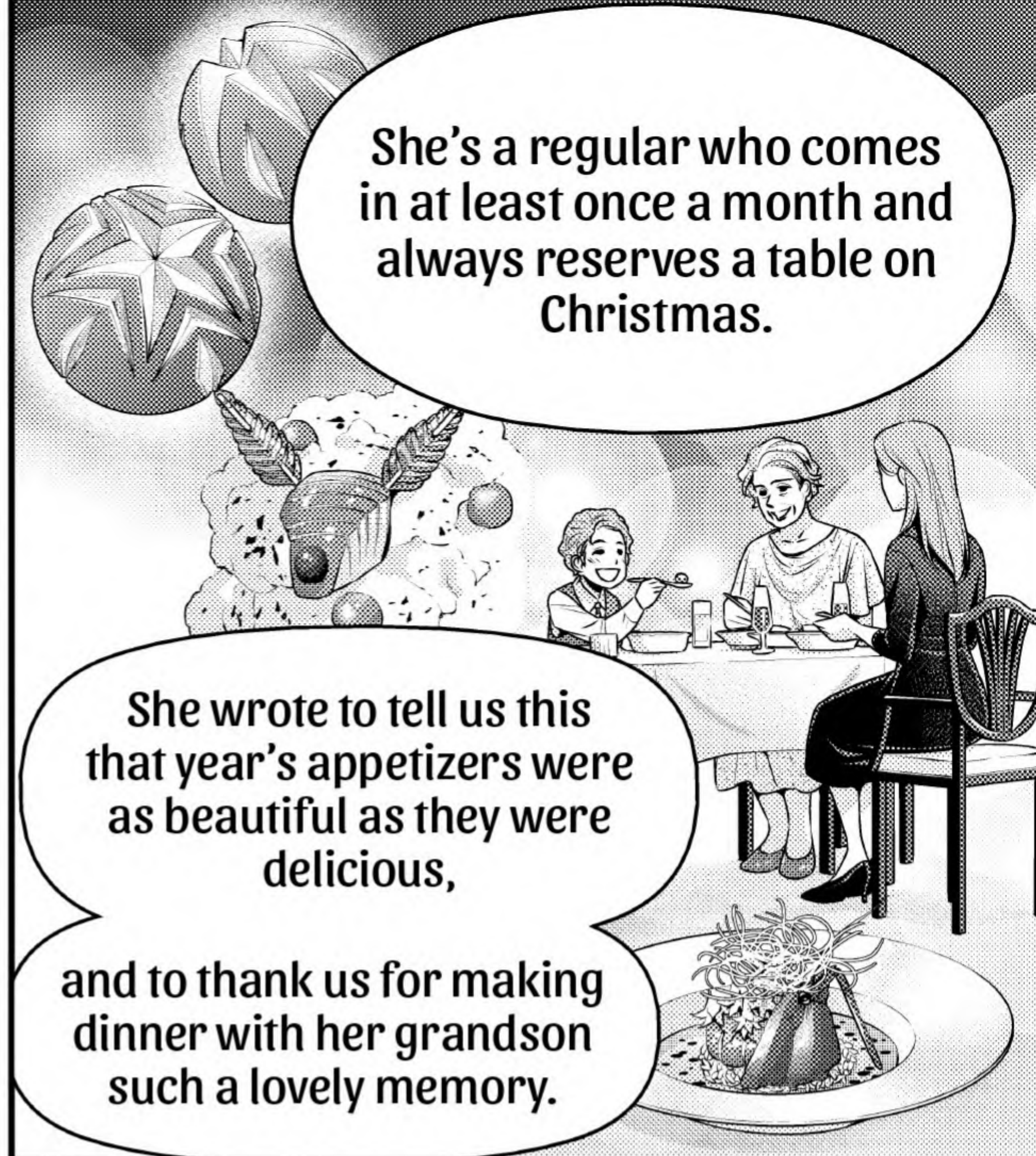






I understand those vegetable carvings were your idea.

They're all over social media.



She's a regular who comes in at least once a month and always reserves a table on Christmas.

She wrote to tell us this that year's appetizers were as beautiful as they were delicious,

and to thank us for making dinner with her grandson such a lovely memory.



But I think it's wonderful to try new things...

...and strive to have people savor food with as many senses as possible.

Italian cuisine has a reputation for being delicious but a little on the plain side.

Some would even say that's the essence of Italian.



Thank you.

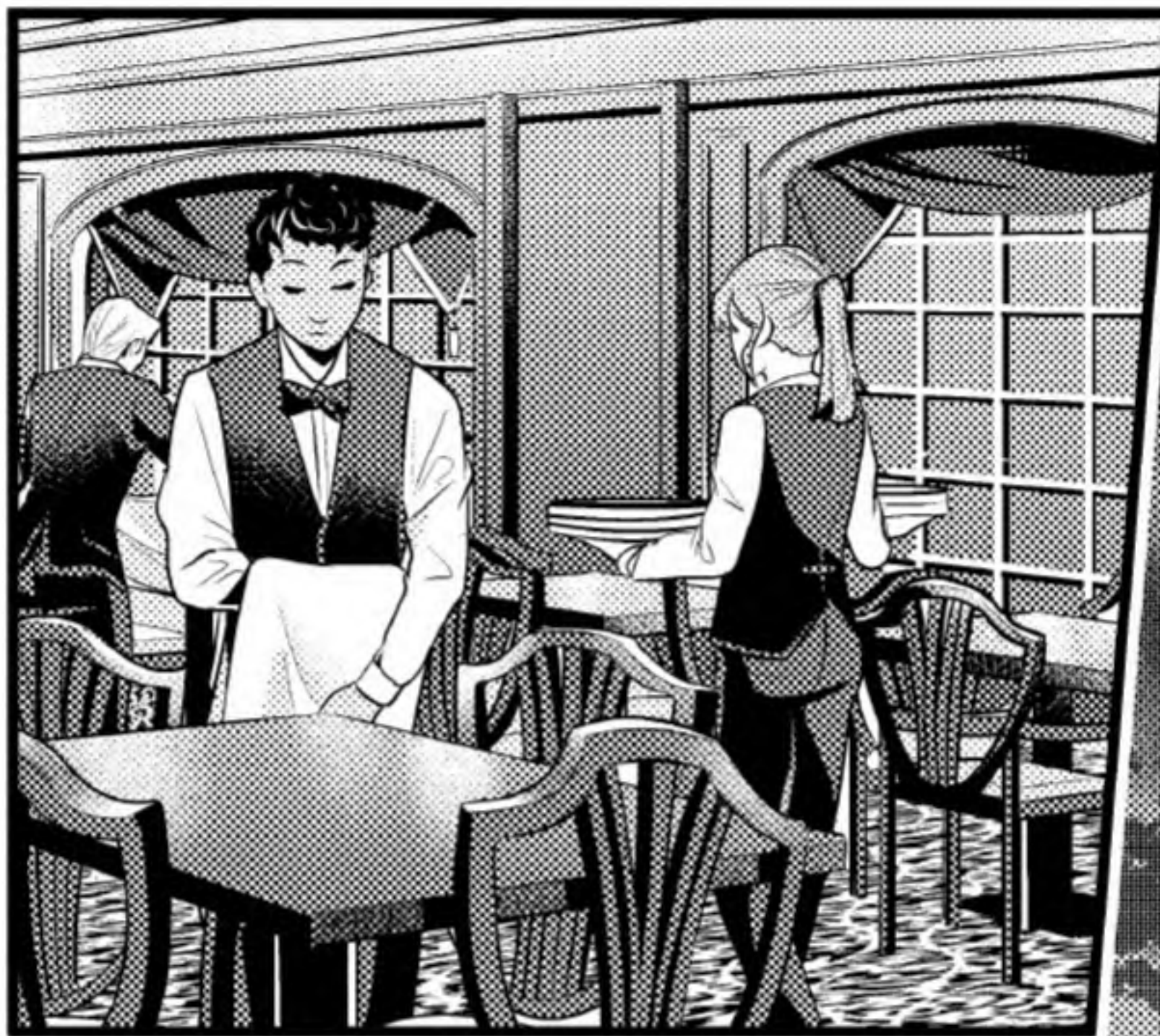
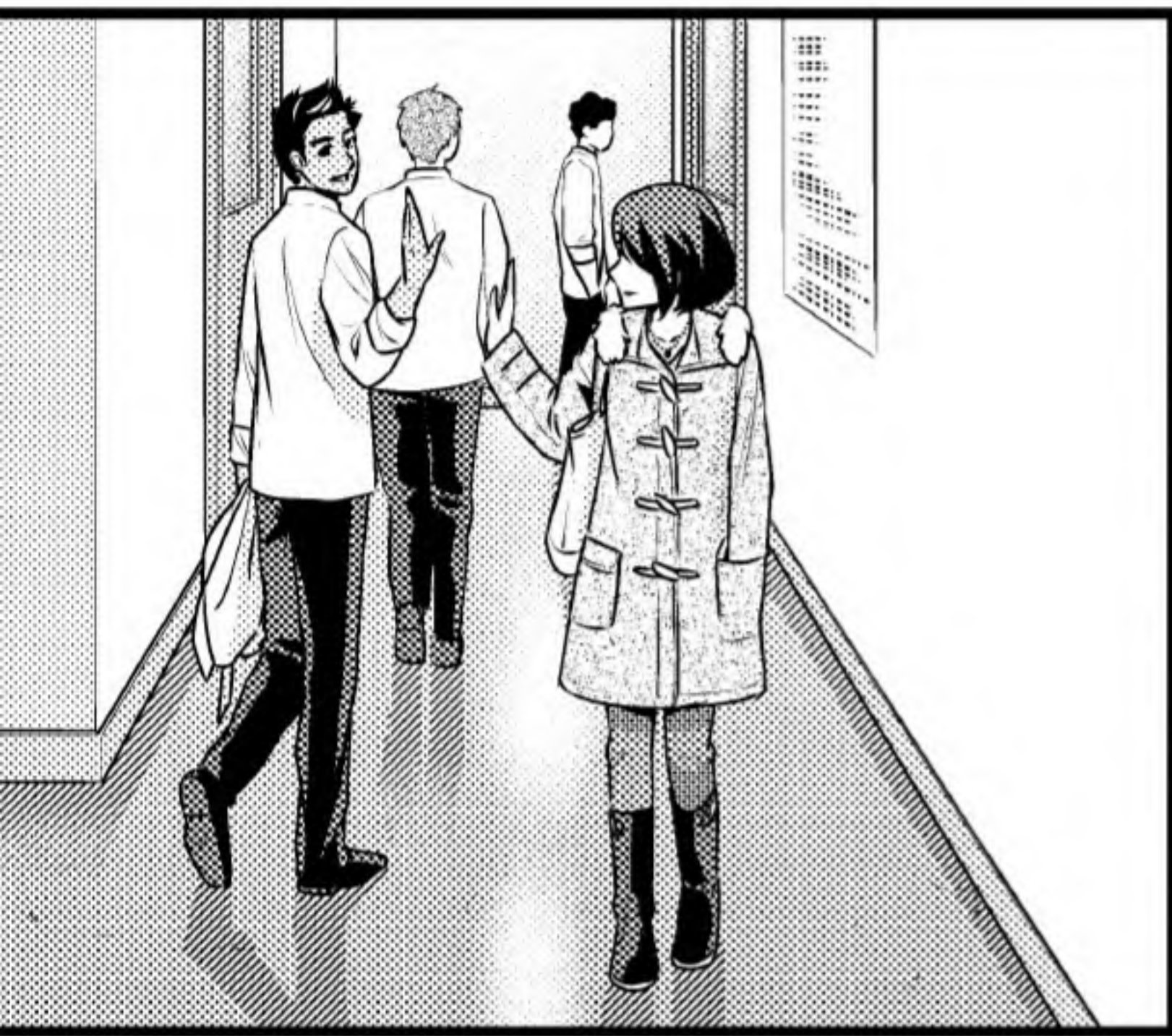
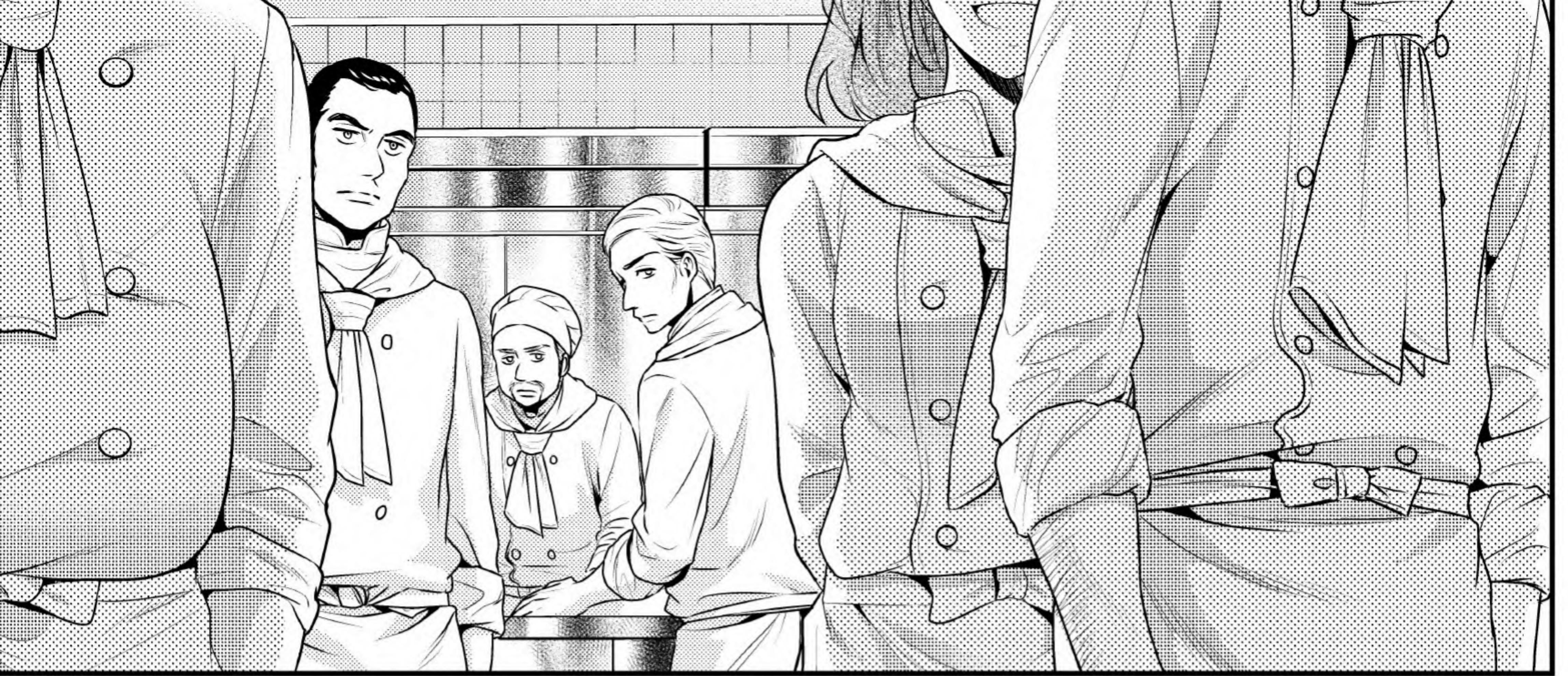
Keep up the great work.

The ideas and techniques you two brought to the table made our customers' experience extra special.













ABOUT WHAT?

THE MVP THING.

I MEAN, WE HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN WORKING HERE FOR THAT LONG.

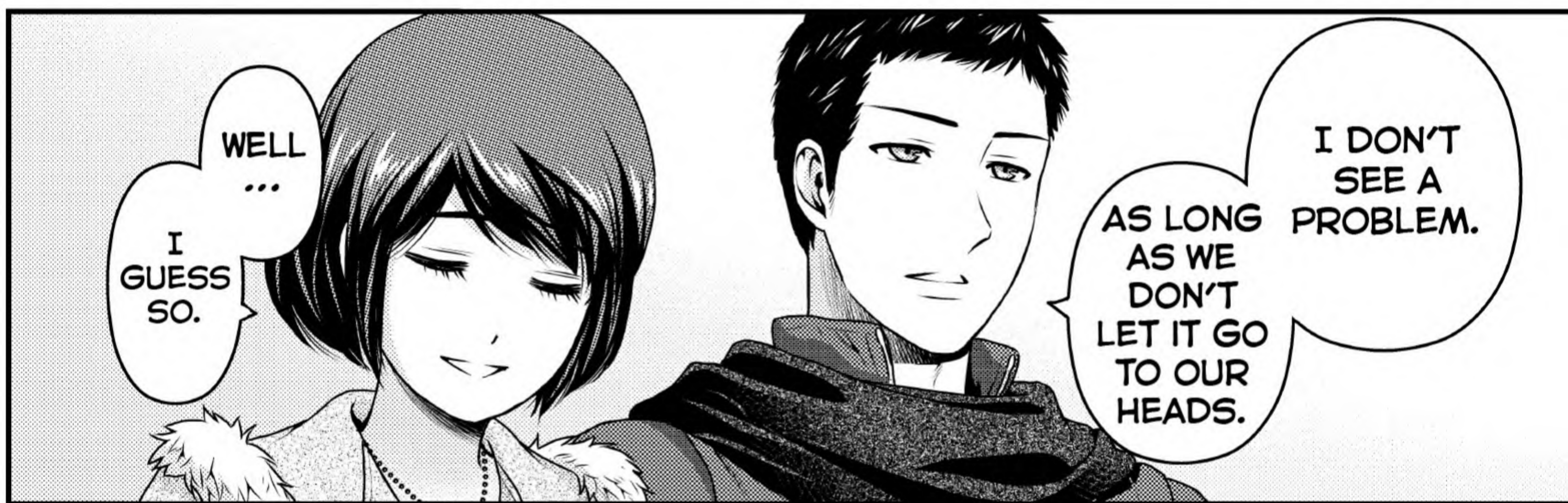
YOU REALLY THINK IT'S OKAY IF WE BELIEVE THEM?



HEY.

LEAVING?

YEAH.



WELL ...

I GUESS SO.

I DON'T SEE A PROBLEM.

AS LONG AS WE DON'T LET IT GO TO OUR HEADS.



THANKS.



I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT TO DO DECORATIVE CARVING FOR THE CHRISTMAS MENU...

...IF YOU HADN'T BROUGHT IT UP, TACHIBANA.





Y'KNOW,

I FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE FIRST GOOD THING THAT'S HAPPENED IN A WHILE.



YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE SKILLS.

I JUST HAD AN IDEA.

YEAH, WELL,



WHEN I OPENED THE BOX, THE HANDLE WAS ALREADY BROKEN.

YEAH, A MUG.

WAS IT TABLEWARE OR SOMETHING?

HIS PRESENT BROKE?



...TO FIX IT?

WANT ME...



HUH ?

CAN YOU?



AND HE'S DEPRESSED FOR SOME REASON BUT WON'T TELL ME WHY.

MY BOY-FRIEND'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT BROKE IN THE MAIL,

IT'S JUST BEEN BUMMER AFTER BUMMER LATELY.





YEAH. IT'S AN ANCIENT TECHNIQUE FOR REPAIRING CERAMICS.

IT'S CALLED KINTSUGI?



THEY'RE NOT QUITE WHAT YOU'D USE FOR KINTSUGI, BUT THEY'LL DO THE JOB.

I BORROWED 'EM FROM MY ROOM-MATE. HE'S A BIG DIY GUY.

I'M SURPRISED YOU HAD TOOLS LIKE THAT.



ONE OF MY COWORKERS SHOWED ME THE ROPES.



WE REPAIRED PIECES THAT CHIPPED OR SPLIT AND USED THEM IN THE BACK.

THE JAPANESE RESTAURANT I USED TO WORK AT USED A LOT OF EXPENSIVE EARTHENWARE.

















**Right?!**

**I'm sure teasing us  
like that must be  
tons of fun for *you*,  
but for us,  
it's just super  
annoying!**

**No?**

**I don't  
mind,  
really.**

**HUH?!**







## CHAPTER 208: WORTH THE RISK



C'mon, out with it! ♡

I mean...

...exactly what I said.



What's *that* supposed to mean, Tokiya?

You don't care if people think something's goin' on between you and Rui?

Or maybe you *want* people to think that!

Daniela...!



Er...

Huh?

Hey, now...





but if people want to think that, it's no skin off my nose.

Or, what?

It might bother Tachibana...

...since she's already in a relationship,



チ  
ク  
〜  
PANG



Would you have preferred it if I said something like,

"I wouldn't be caught dead dating a girl like *her*"?



I'm not mad.

AWW, DON'T BE MAD, TOKIYA!  
I'M SORRY!

Here, have some pizza and turn that frown upside down!

I said I'm not mad.



OH.

RIGHT ...

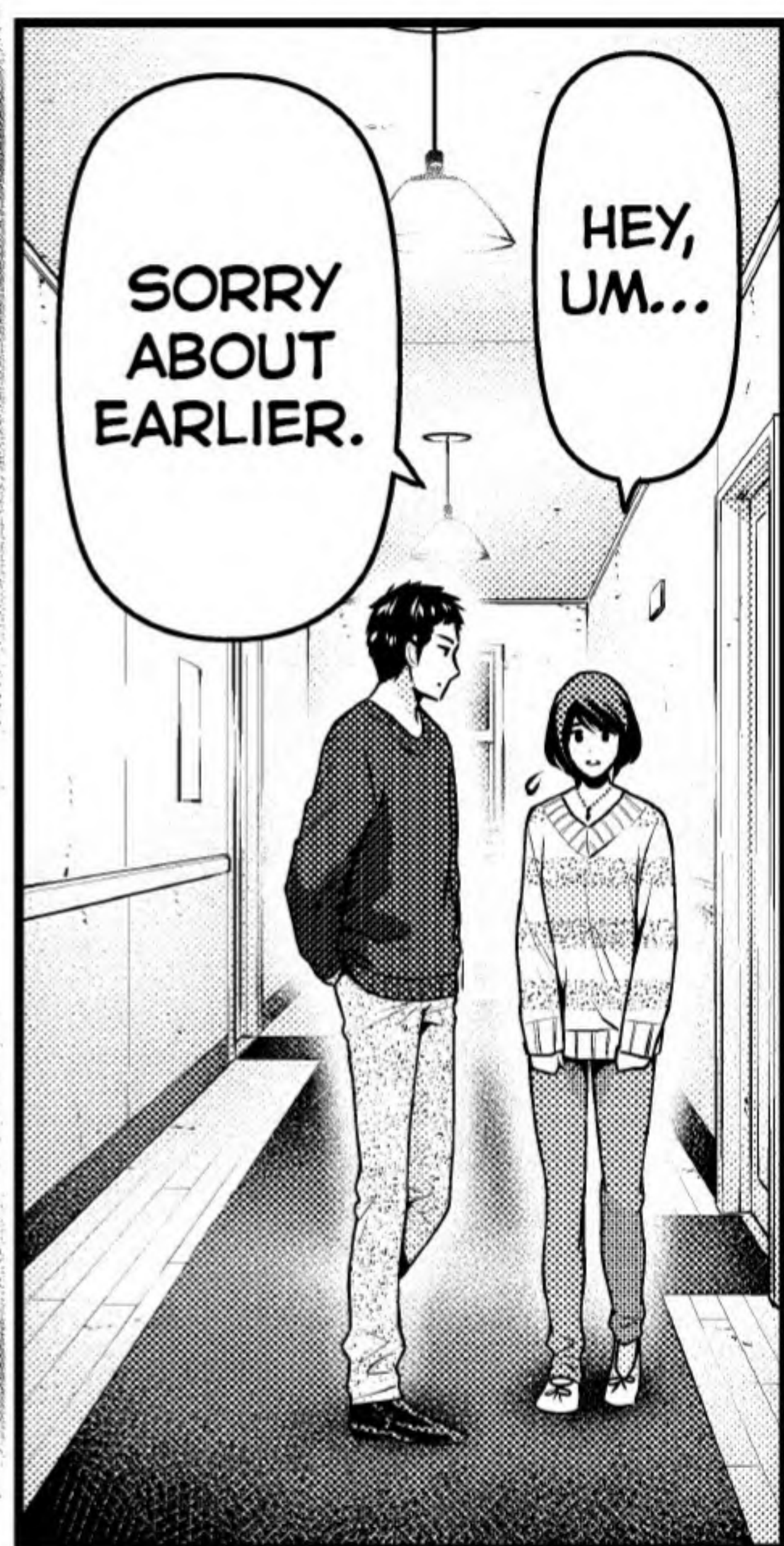
NOW, SETTLE DOWN AND LET'S FIX YOUR MUG.





WE CAN DO THE REST AFTER I GET THE MATERIALS.

NOW TO LET IT DRY FOR A COUPLE DAYS.







OH.

I GUESS  
WE'RE  
JUST CO-  
WORKERS,  
HUH?



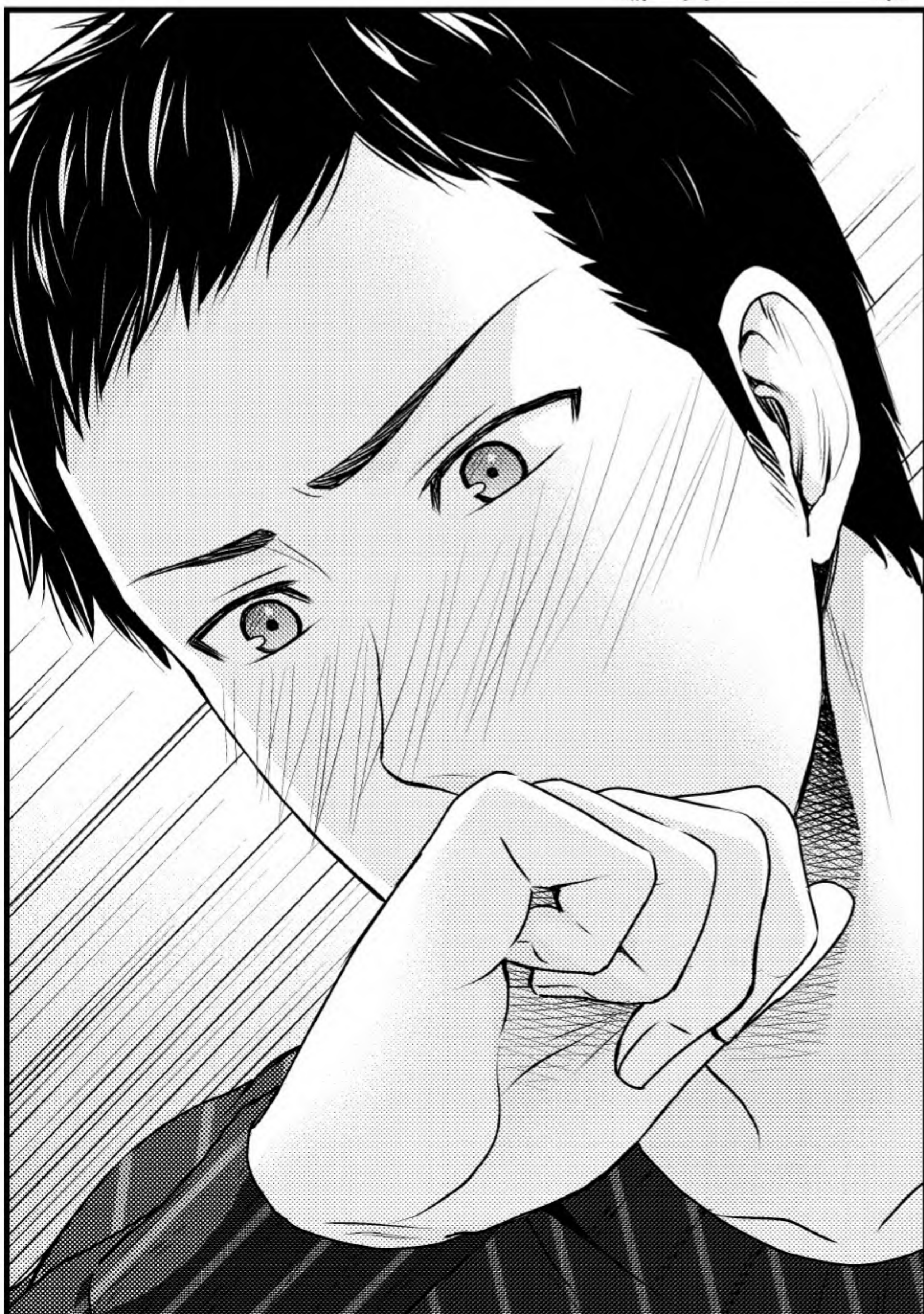
UH...  
OKAY.

GOOD  
NIGHT.

LATER.



IT'S  
GREAT  
TO HAVE  
FRIENDS  
YOU CAN  
COUNT  
ON!



キ  
シ  
...  
KRK

キ  
シ  
KRK



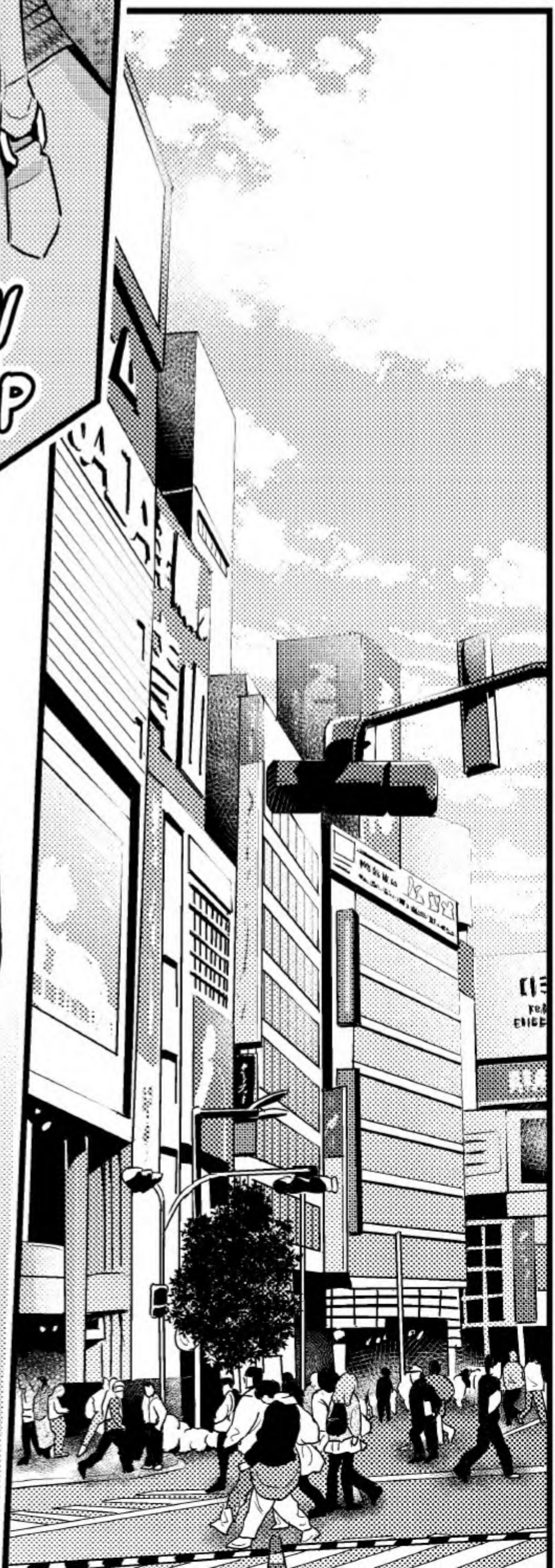
タ  
ッ  
TMP

タ  
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TMP

TMP  
タ  
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MY FEET  
ARE KILL-  
ING ME.  
I WORE  
HEELS  
TODAY,  
Y'KNOW.

GOD, COULD  
YOU LIVE ANY  
FARTHER  
FROM THE  
STATION?



TEXT  
ME YOUR  
ADDRESS.  
I'LL  
GOOGLE  
IT.

WHERE  
ARE  
YOU?

HOME  
?

OH, SHUT  
UP AND  
SEND IT  
TO ME.



OR A  
HEARSE  
?

SHOULD  
I CALL  
FOR AN  
AMBU-  
LANCE?

OH,  
GOD.  
IS IT  
ROT-  
TING?

HEARSE,  
PLEASE...

DON'T  
PLAY  
ALONG,  
DUMMY.

H!!  
PUNT



**AAH!**



MY  
LIFE'S  
OVER  
ANYWAY  
...

JUST  
KILL  
ME.

IS THAT  
A DEAD  
BODY?!





SO?  
WHAT  
HAPPENED  
THIS  
TIME?

**LOSER**

HUH  
?

WHAT LIFE?  
ACTING WAS  
THE ONLY  
THING YOU  
HAD GOING  
FOR YOU.



IT'S  
NOT  
FUNNY!

IT'S  
HILARIOUS!  
YOU'VE BEEN  
DOWN IN THE  
DUMPS THREE  
DAYS OVER  
THAT?



AH  
HA  
HA  
HA!

WHAT,  
IS  
THAT  
ALL?!



HE  
DEFINITELY  
HATES ME  
NOW!

NAH,  
YOU'RE  
GOOD.

THE  
OPPO-  
SITE,  
ACTU-  
ALLY.



JUST WHEN I  
THOUGHT HE WAS  
FINALLY STARTING  
TO SEE ME AS  
MORE THAN JUST  
A CLUBMATE, HE  
SHOWS UP ACTING  
ALL CHUMMY  
WITH HIS EX.

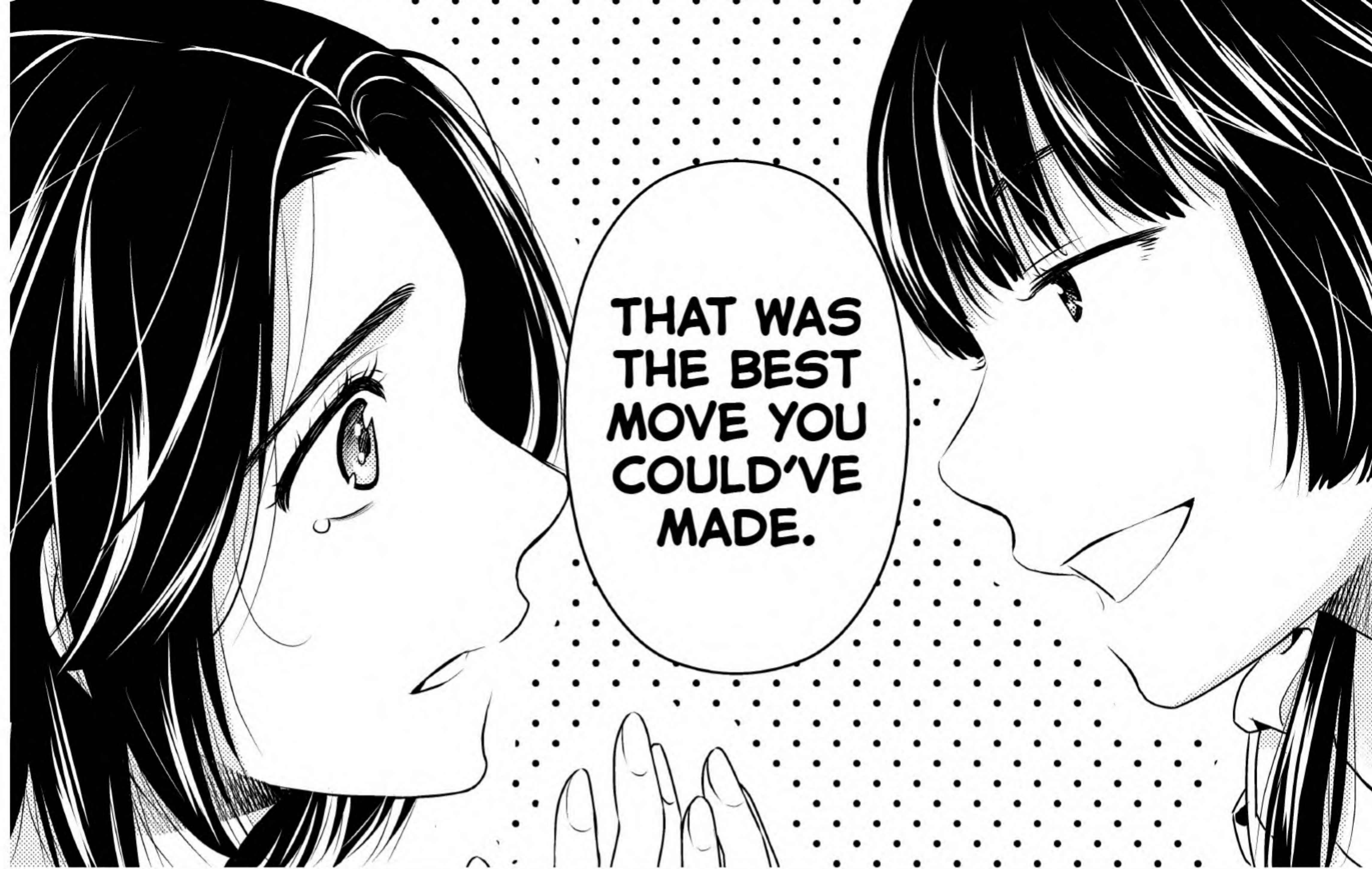
AND  
HER  
BOOBS  
WERE  
HUGE.

I  
SUDDENLY  
FELT SO  
HOPELESS  
AND JUST...  
LOST IT.

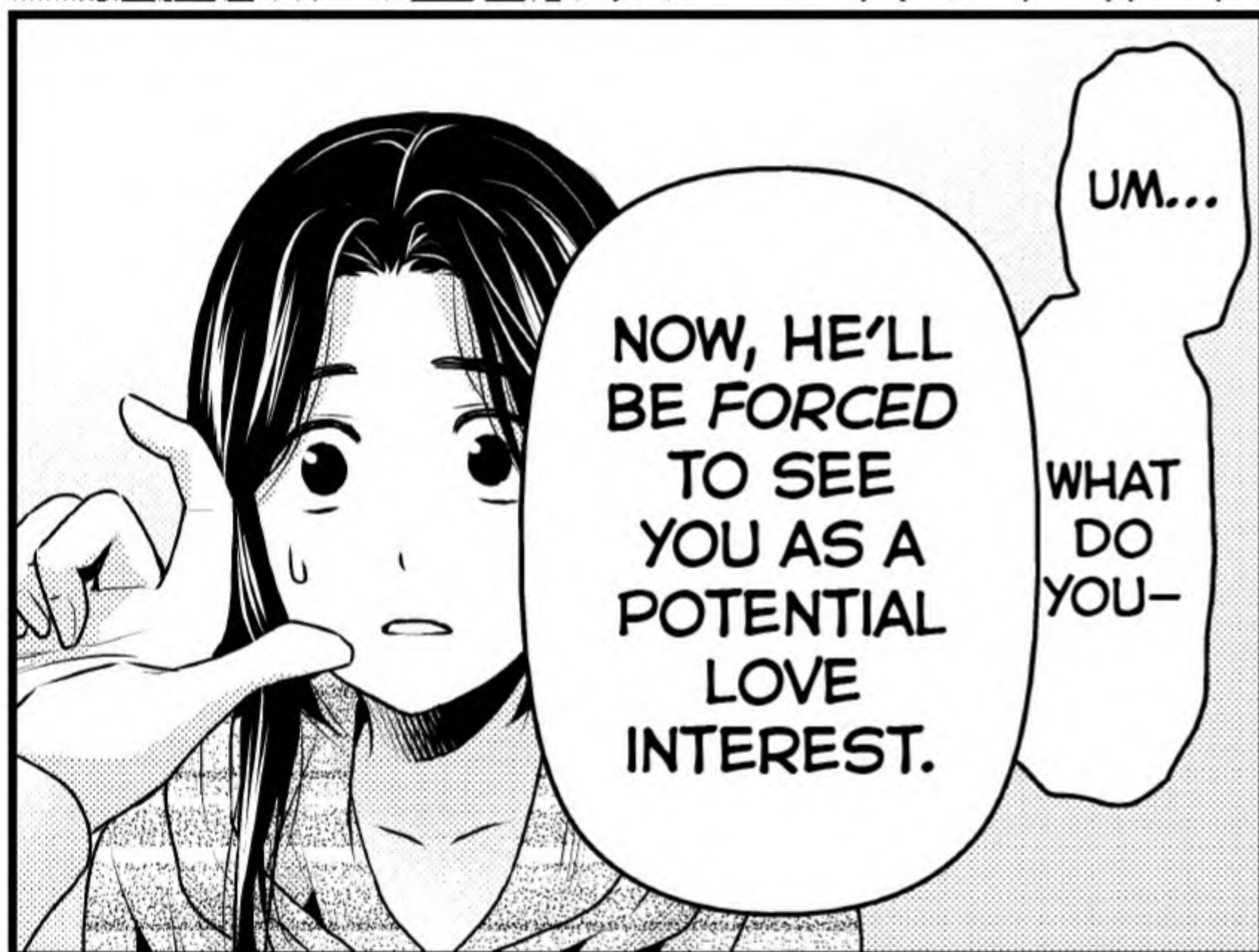
WELL,  
I REGRET  
IT SO  
MUCH IT'S  
KILLING  
ME.

I STILL  
CAN'T  
BELIEVE  
I DID  
THAT!





THAT WAS  
THE BEST  
MOVE YOU  
COULD'VE  
MADE.



NOW, HE'LL  
BE FORCED  
TO SEE  
YOU AS A  
POTENTIAL  
LOVE  
INTEREST.

UM...

WHAT  
DO  
YOU-



WELL, MAYBE  
NOT THE  
BEST. YOU  
SKIPPED  
LIKE THREE  
STEPS  
ANYWAY.

HUH?



JUST ACT  
LIKE NOTHING  
HAPPENED  
AND LET  
YOUR KISS  
GNAW AWAY  
AT HIM.

EVEN IF HE  
SEEMS  
UNCOMFORT-  
ABLE, DON'T  
TRY TO PLAY  
IT OFF.

LISTEN  
TO ME.

THE NEXT  
TIME YOU  
SEE HIM,  
WHATEVER  
YOU DO,  
DON'T  
APOLOGIZE.





...

I'M NOT  
SURE I  
FOLLOW,  
BUT  
OKAY...



YES,  
'MA'AM!

BUT...

UNDER-  
STAND  
?!

UNDER-  
STAND?



ANYTIME!  
MAKE SURE  
YOU EAT WELL.  
THE FLU'S  
BEEN GOING  
AROUND  
LATELY.

I'LL  
TRY.



OH,  
RIGHT.

I ALMOST  
FORGOT.



THANKS,  
HINA-NEE.

I REALLY  
APPRECI-  
ATE IT.

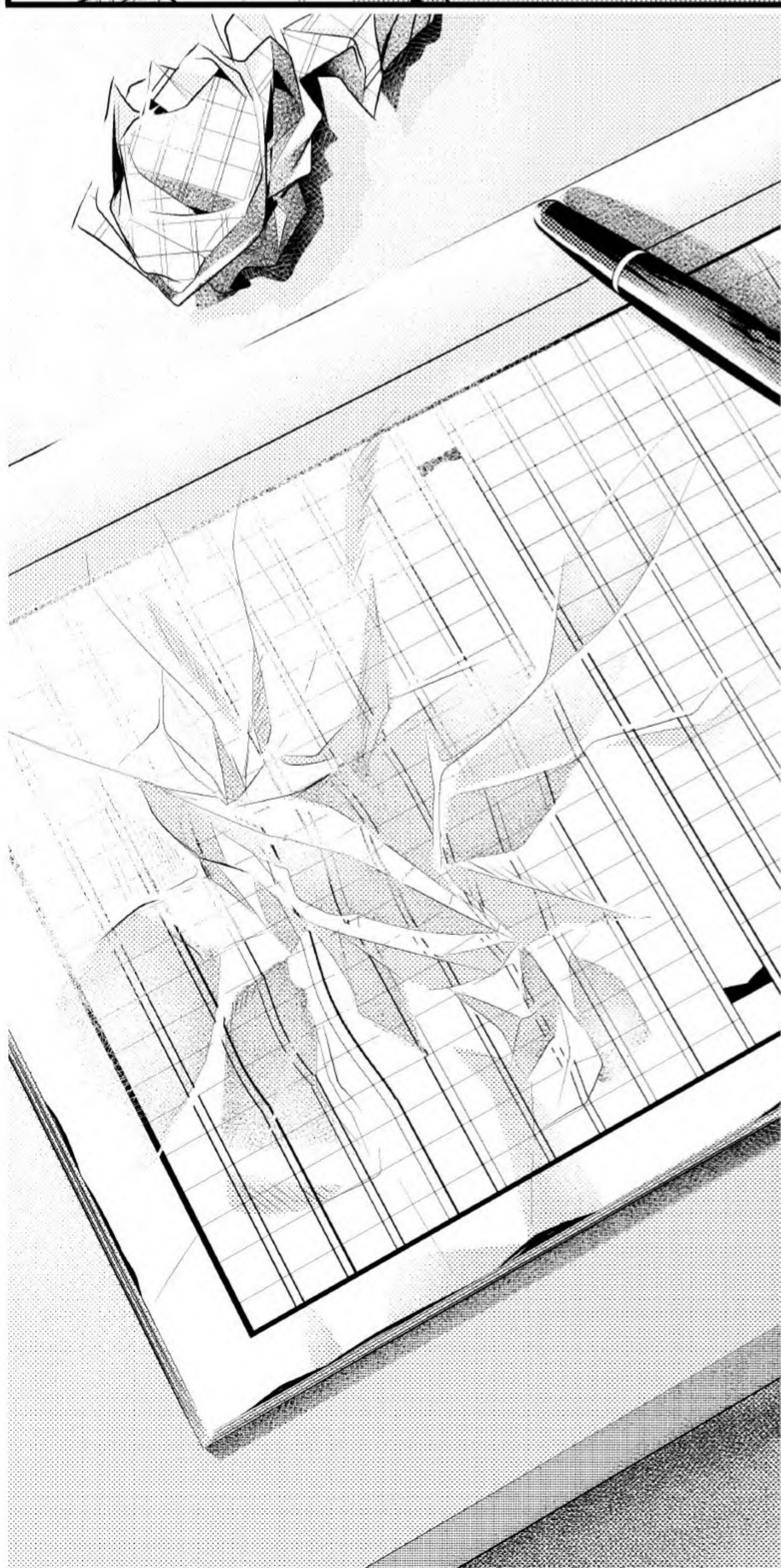
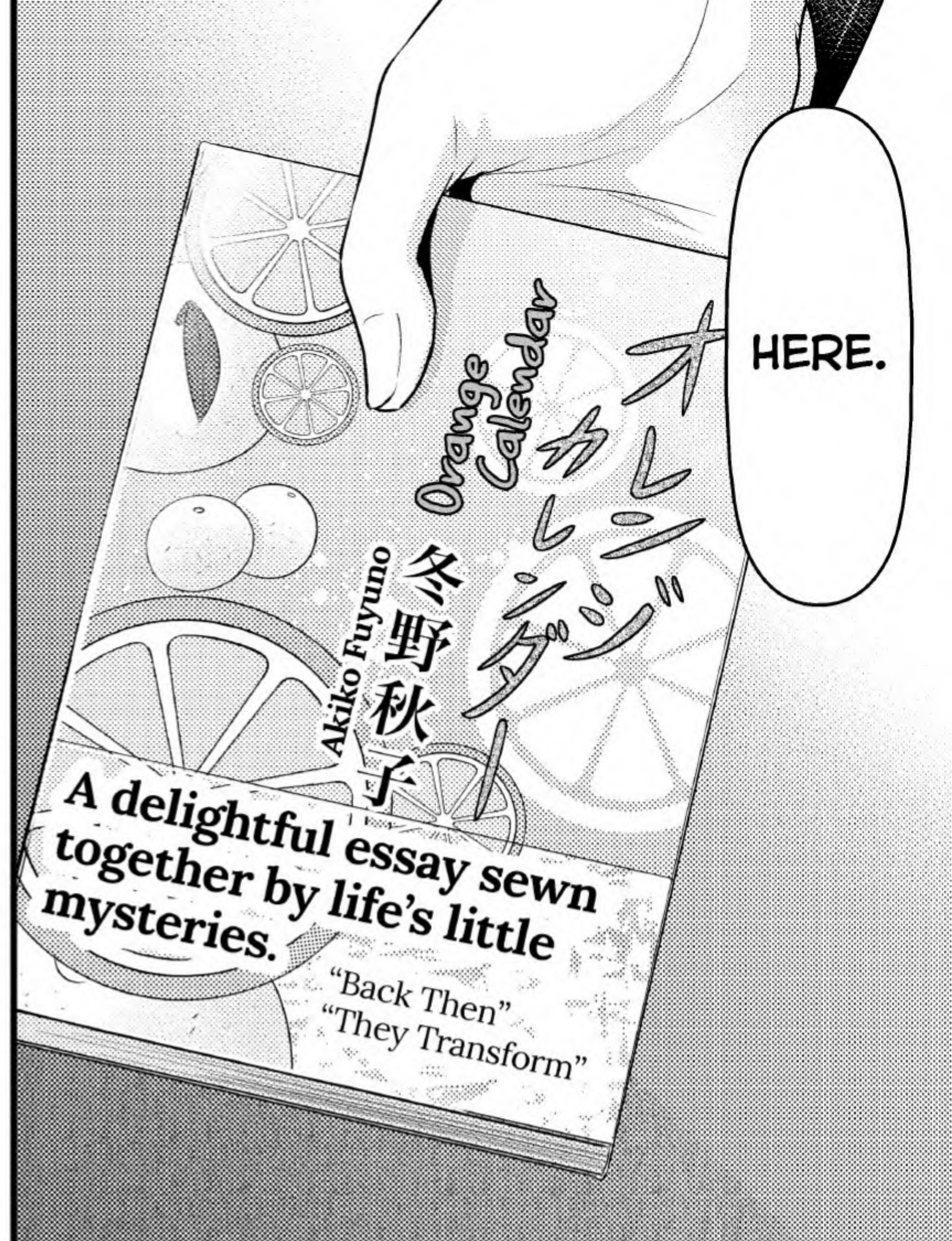


I GOT  
YOU  
SOME  
READY-  
TO-EAT  
SIDES,

SALAD  
MIX,  
PORK...

OH, AND  
SOME  
SAUCES  
YOU JUST  
STIR INTO  
WHATEVER  
YOU'RE  
MAKING.













LIFT  
YOUR  
HEAD!

TSUTAYA-  
SAN,  
PLEASE!



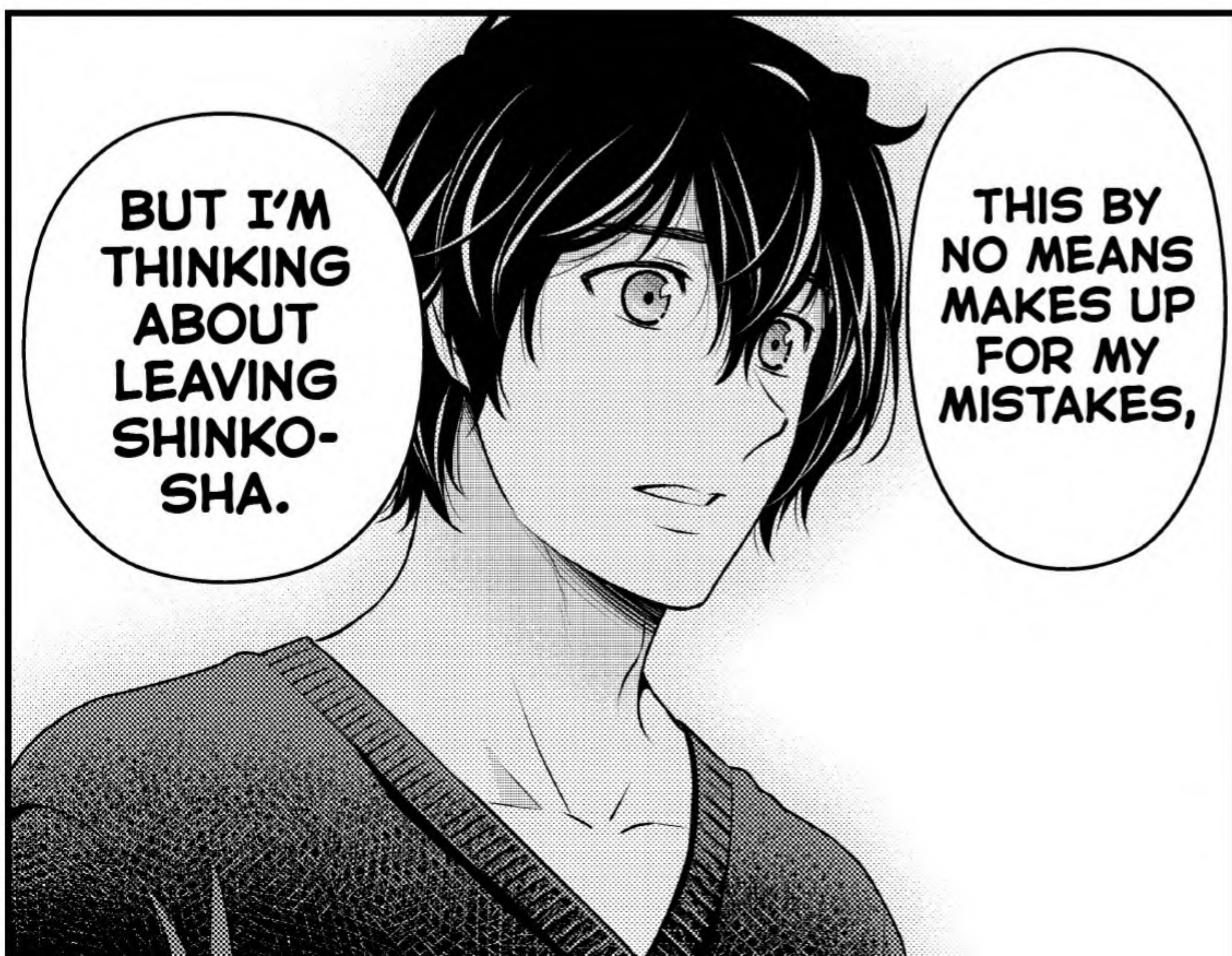
I'M...

...SO  
SORRY  
ABOUT  
WHAT  
HAP-  
PENED!



I FAILED TO  
PROTECT  
YOU WHEN  
I WAS  
THE ONLY  
ONE WHO  
COULD!

IT HURTS  
MY HEART  
TO THINK  
ABOUT HOW  
BETRAYED  
YOU MUST  
HAVE FELT.



BUT I'M  
THINKING  
ABOUT  
LEAVING  
SHINKO-  
SHA.

THIS BY  
NO MEANS  
MAKES UP  
FOR MY  
MISTAKES,



BUT I  
STILL  
REGRET  
THE WAY  
WE HAN-  
DLED  
THINGS.

YOUR  
BOOK  
MIGHT BE  
SELLING  
WELL,

I KNOW.

YOU WERE  
AGAINST  
THAT  
MARKETING  
PLOY ALL  
ALONG,  
RIGHT?





SO—

NO,  
DON'T!



YOU CAN'T  
JUST QUIT  
YOUR JOB!

AND IT'LL  
ALLOW US  
TO TAKE AS  
MUCH TIME  
AS WE NEED  
TO WORK  
ON YOUR  
WRITING.



WHAT?!

AND  
BECOME A  
FREELANCE  
EDITOR.

I'LL  
RE-  
SIGN,

THEN I  
WON'T BE  
UNDER THE  
COMPANY'S  
THUMB  
ANYMORE.



FUJII-  
KUN...



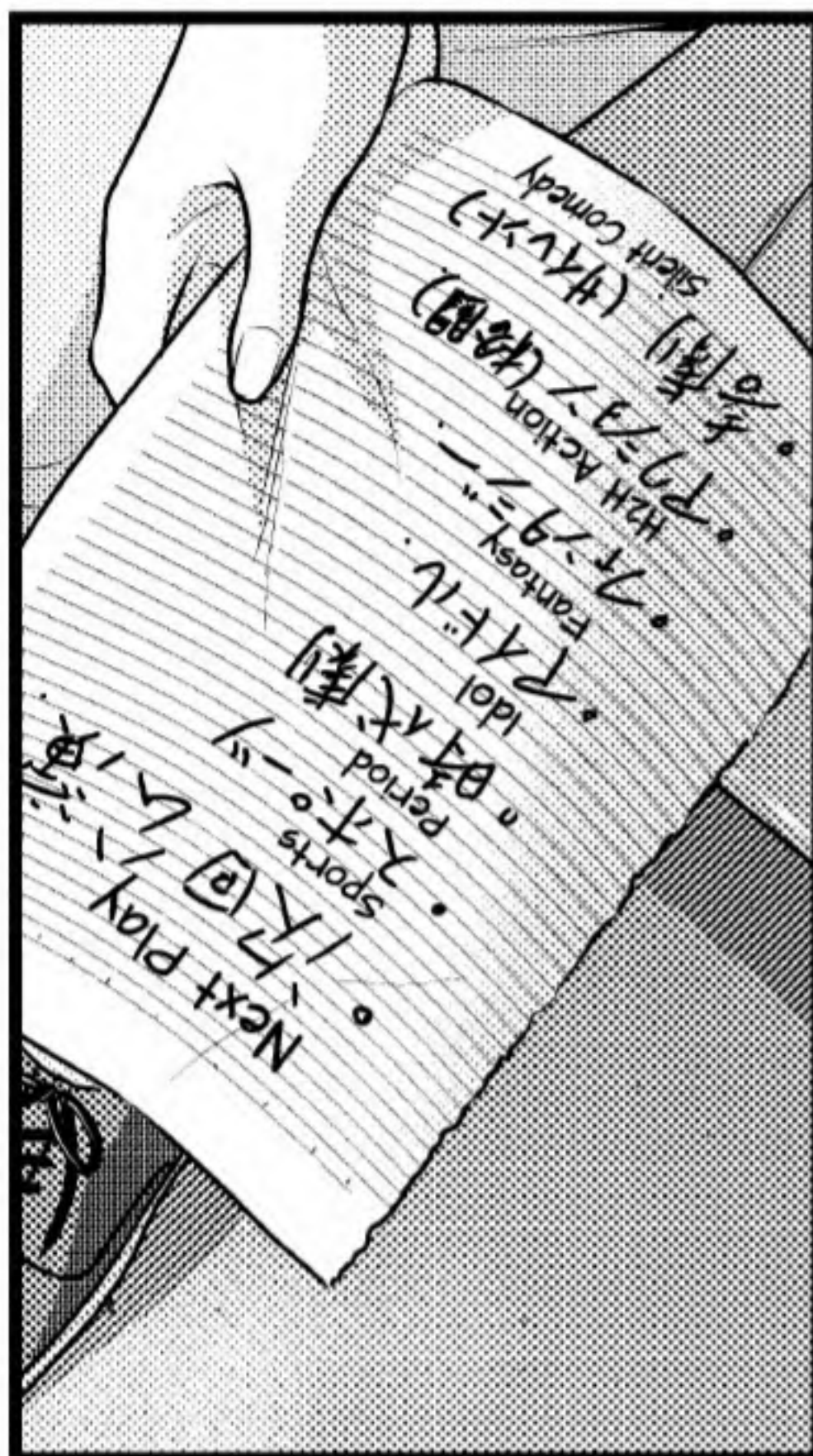
HUH  
?



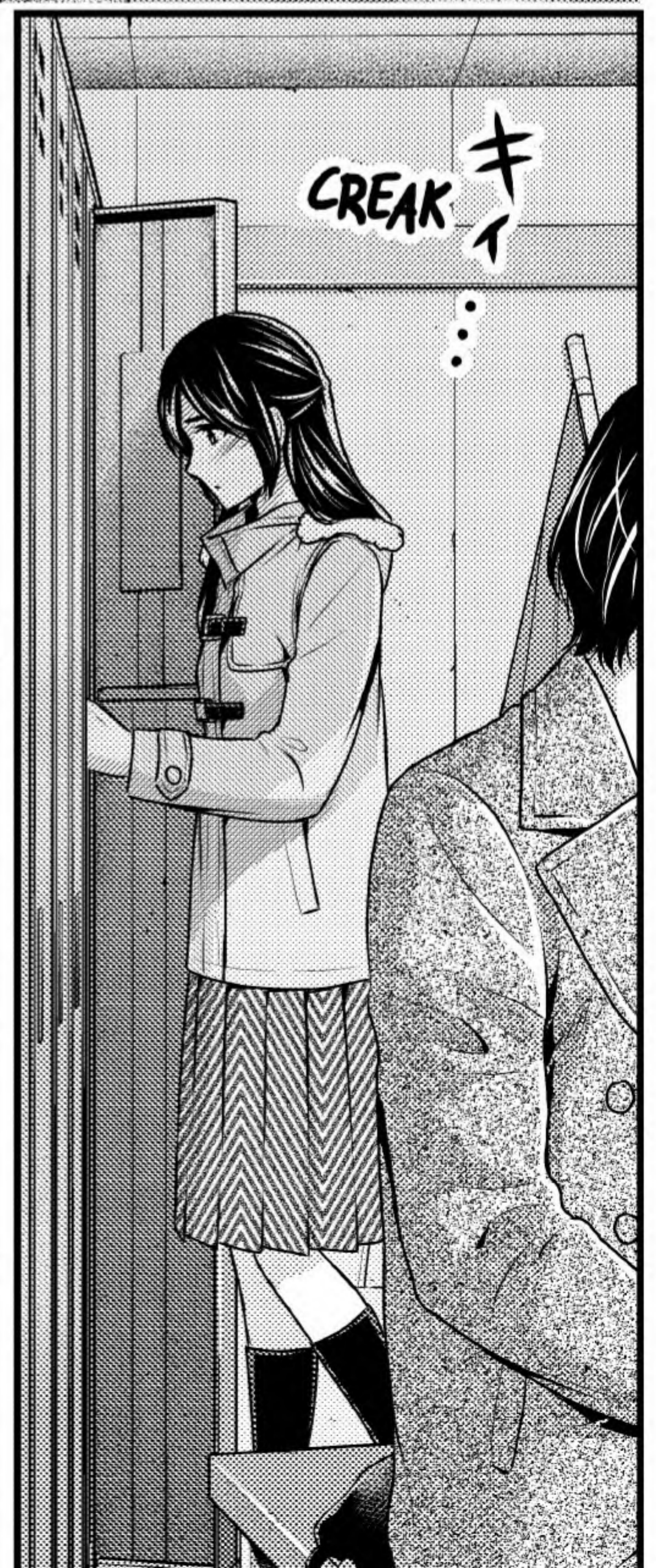
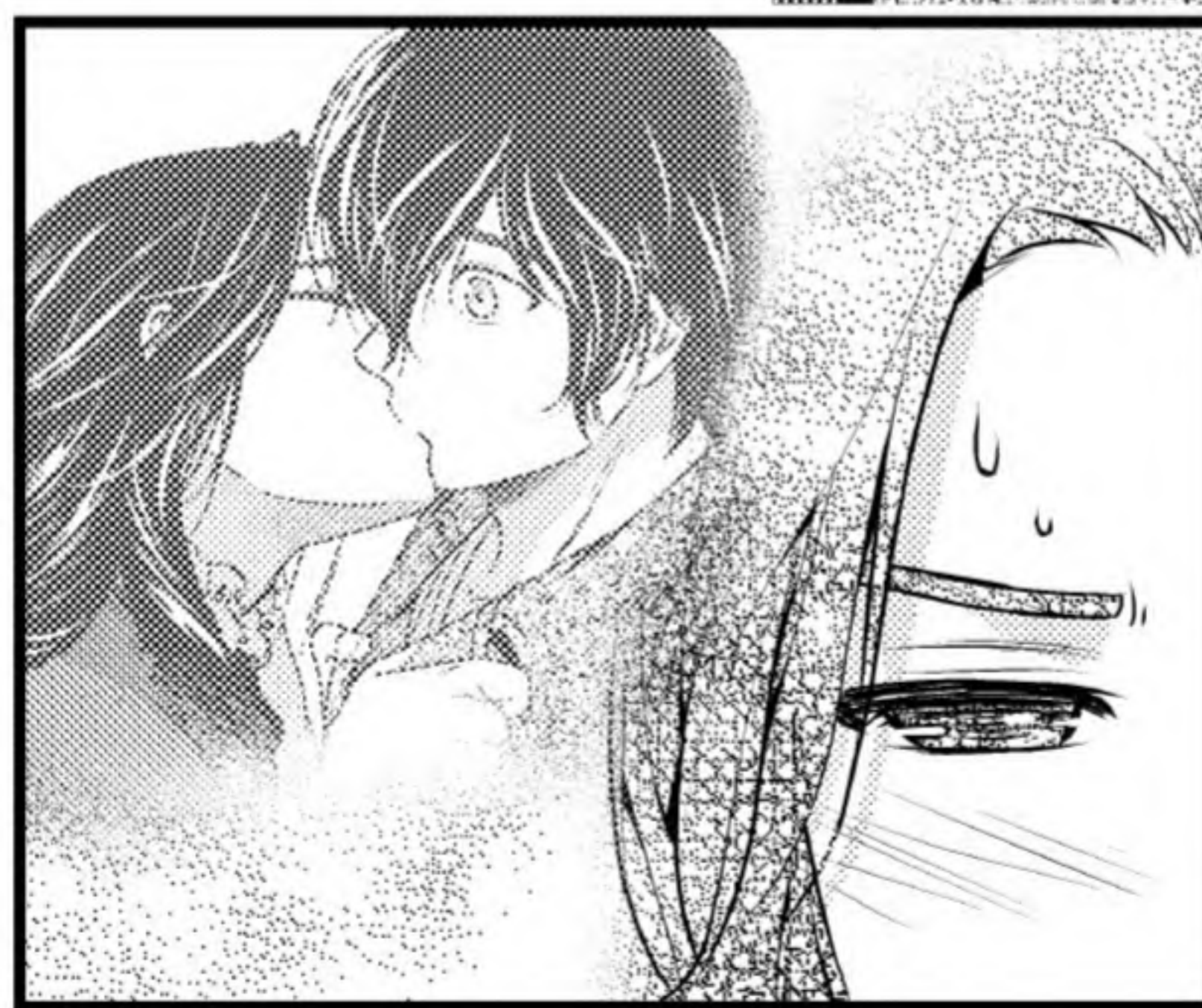
...NOT  
WORTH  
IT.

I'M  
...













I MUST'VE SAID SOME PRETTY HURTFUL THINGS TO YOU WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT.

IF YOU'VE HAD FEELINGS FOR ME ALL THIS TIME,



I WAS JUST LITTLE TOO HYPER FROM THE PLAY! THAT'S ALL!

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!

D-  
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!



LOOKING BACK ON IT,

I'VE ACTUALLY DONE SOMETHING SIMILAR BEFORE.



I WAS KIND OF AN EMOTIONAL WRECK.



AT THE TIME,



GASP /

OH... REALLY?

DON'T PLAY IT OFF

OKAY, THEN.



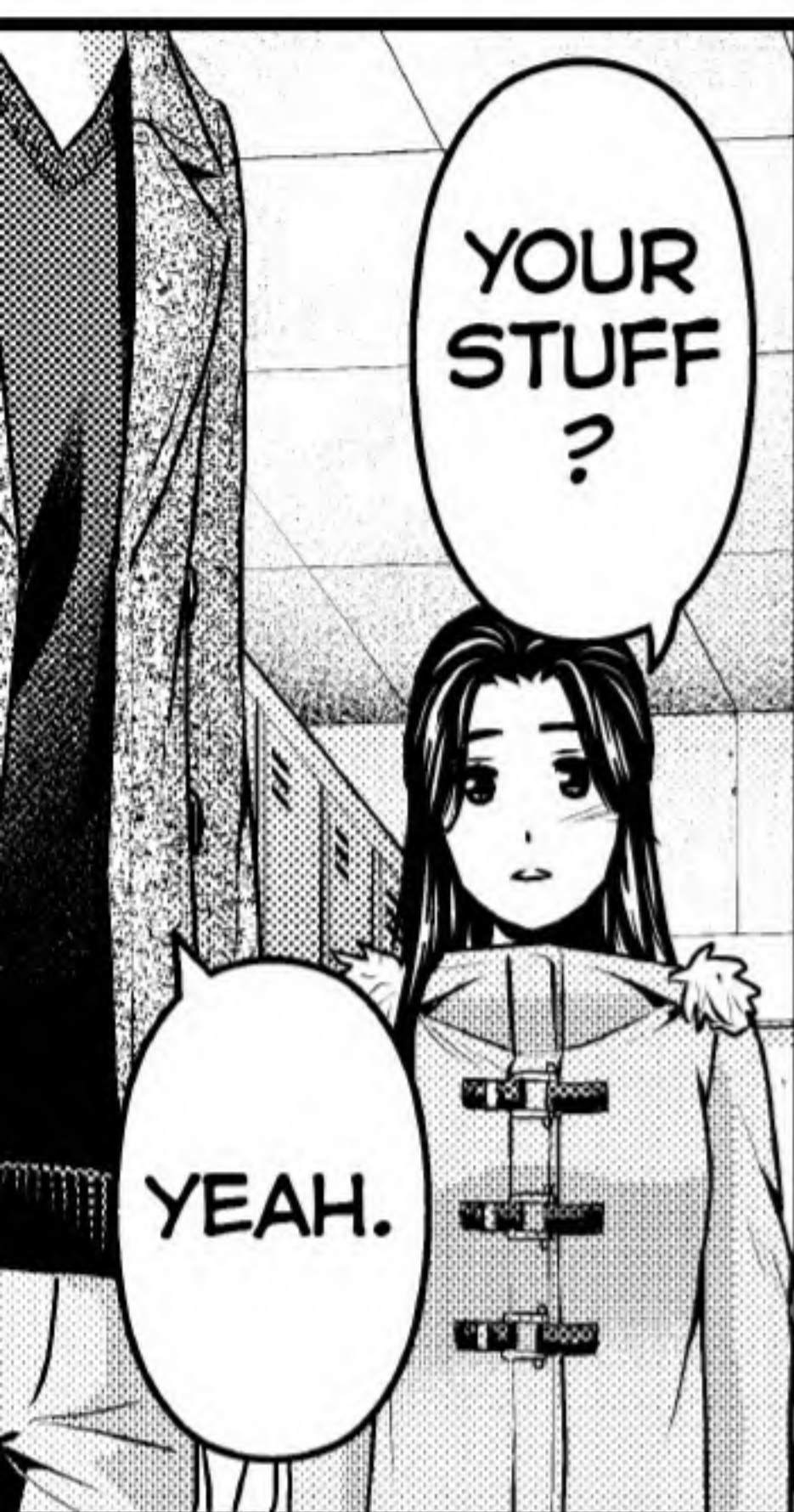


WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, FUJII-KUN?

HM?

S-SO, UM...

...



YOUR STUFF?

YEAH.



I WAS JUST GONNA POP IN REAL QUICK,

BUT I GUESS I SPACED OUT.

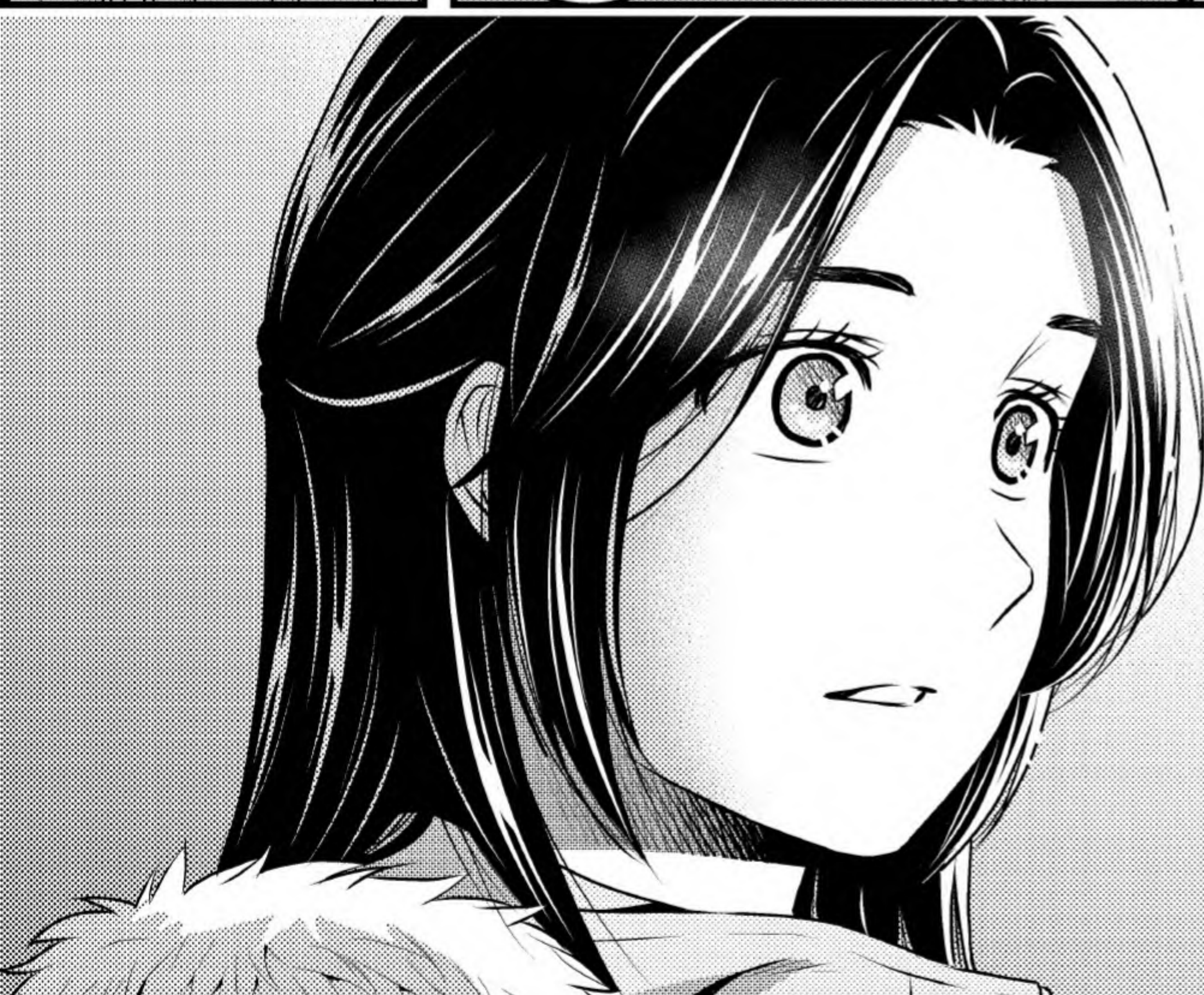
OH.

I CAME TO GET MY STUFF.



...THAT'S NOT THE CASE.

SO, I'M JUST GLAD TO HEAR...



I THINK ...

...I'M GONNA QUIT THE CLUB.



WHY?

BUT...

HUH?



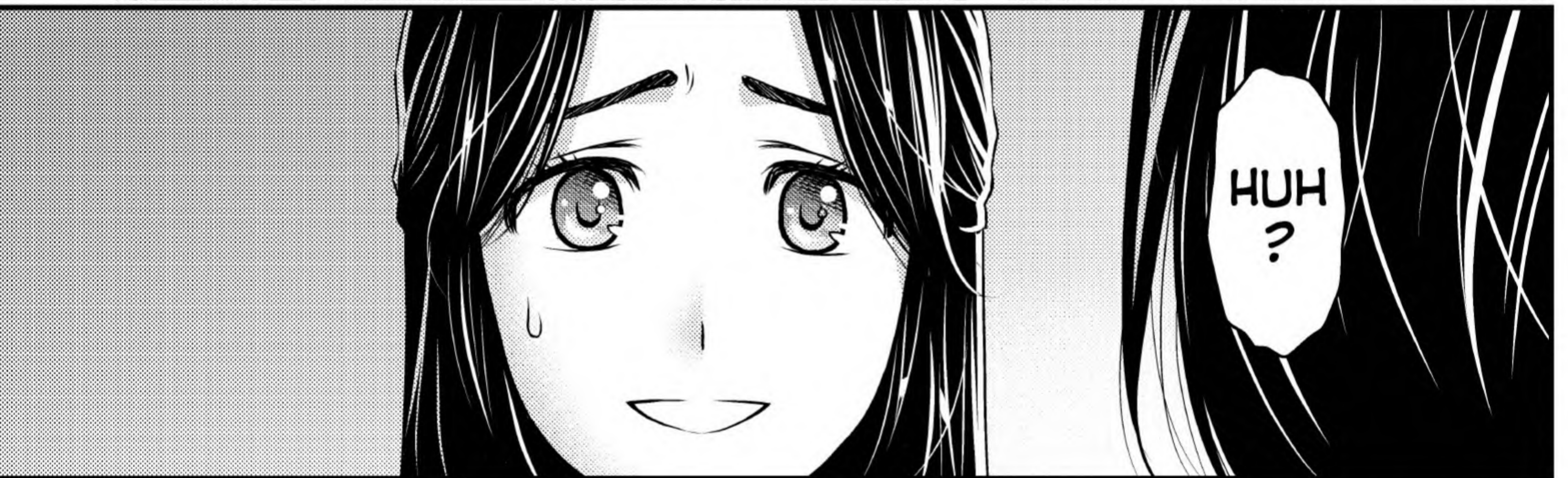


I HIT  
A BRICK  
WALL.

NO MATTER  
HOW HARD  
I TRY, I  
JUST CAN'T  
SEEM TO  
WRITE  
ANYTHING.



# CHAPTER 209: BLANK







SINCE  
WHEN  
?

NOT THAT  
YOU DON'T  
*FEEL* LIKE  
IT, BUT YOU  
CAN'T?

IS IT  
BECAUSE  
OF WHAT  
HAPPENED  
WITH YOUR  
BOOK?!



YOU  
CAN'T  
WRITE?

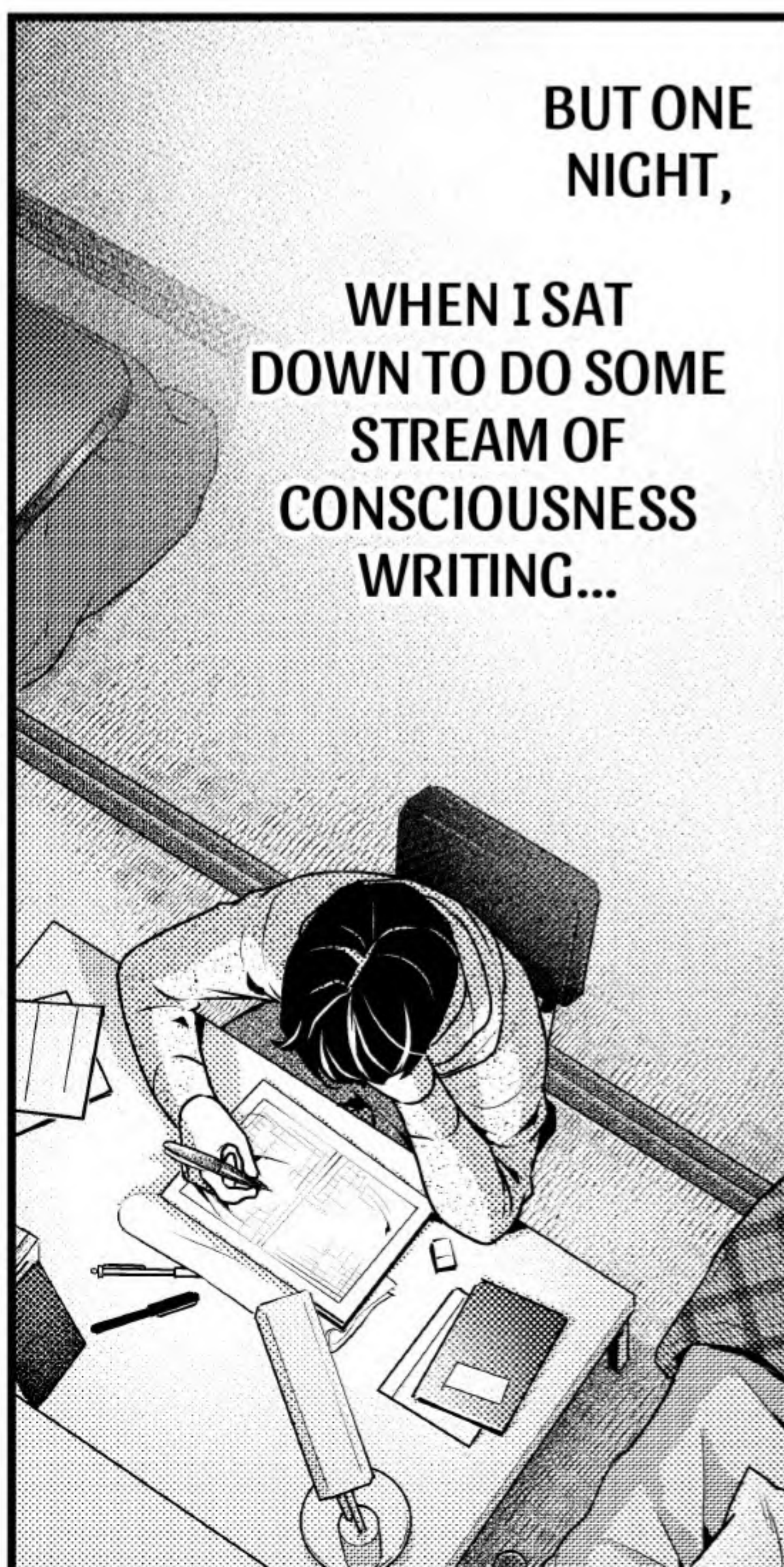
AT  
FIRST,

I DIDN'T  
THINK  
IT WAS  
ANYTHING  
SERIOUS  
EITHER,  
BUT...



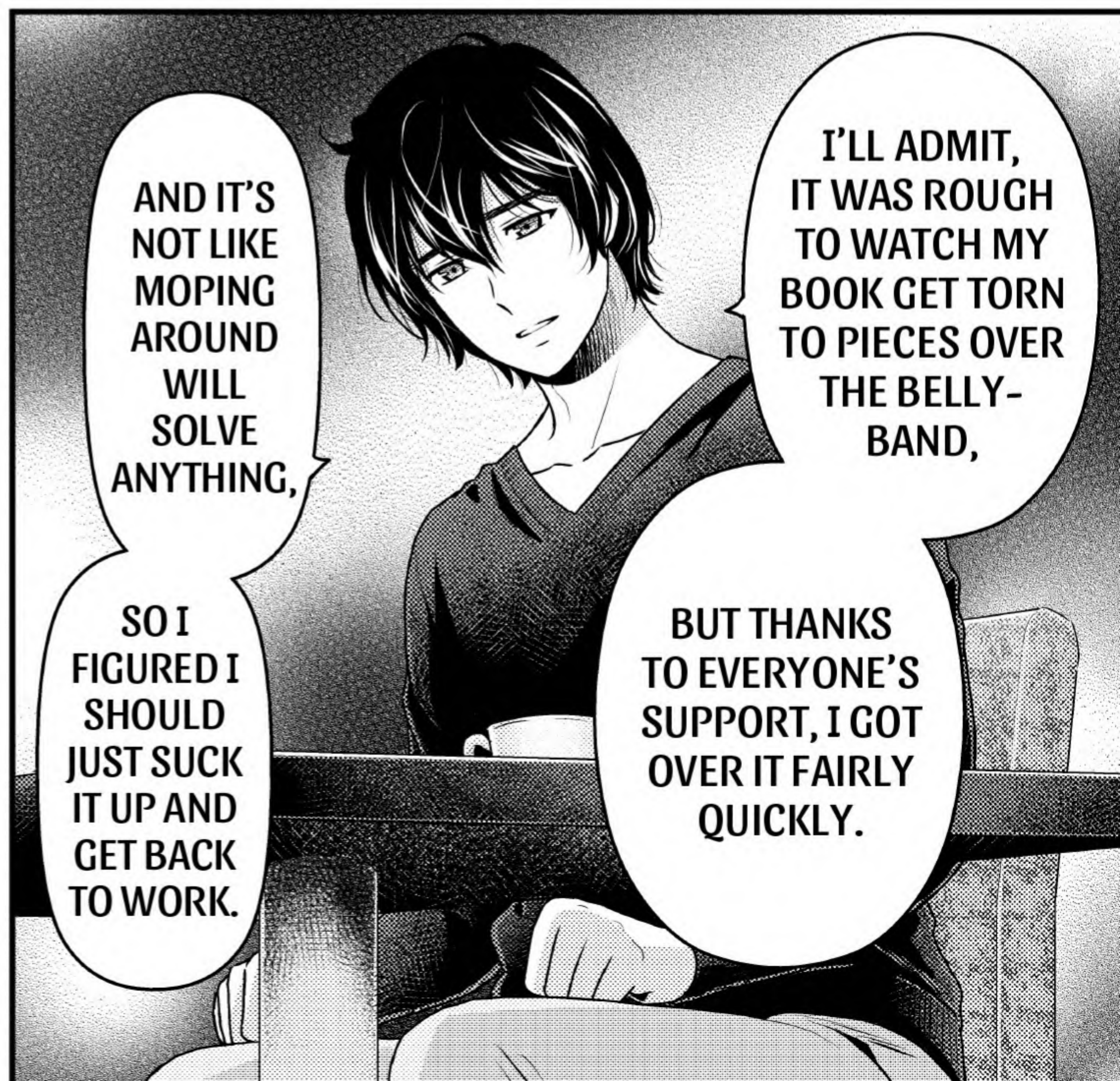
I DIDN'T  
WANT TO CALL  
YOU UNTIL I  
HAD MY NEXT  
DRAFT READY.

TO BE  
HONEST,



BUT ONE  
NIGHT,

WHEN I SAT  
DOWN TO DO SOME  
STREAM OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
WRITING...



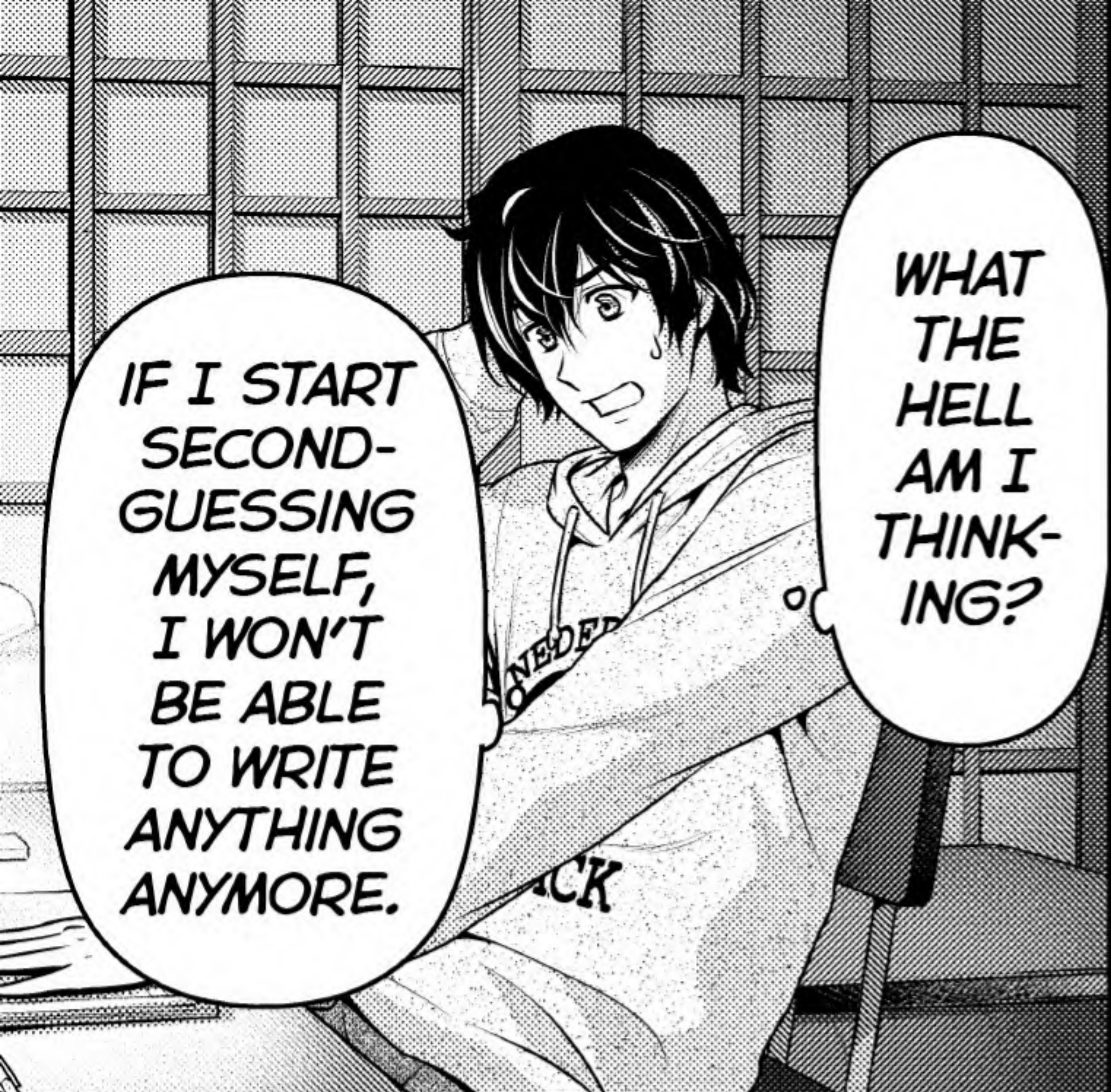
AND IT'S  
NOT LIKE  
MOPING  
AROUND  
WILL  
SOLVE  
ANYTHING,

SO I  
FIGURED I  
SHOULD  
JUST SUCK  
IT UP AND  
GET BACK  
TO WORK.

I'LL ADMIT,  
IT WAS ROUGH  
TO WATCH MY  
BOOK GET TORN  
TO PIECES OVER  
THE BELLY-  
BAND,

BUT THANKS  
TO EVERYONE'S  
SUPPORT, I GOT  
OVER IT FAIRLY  
QUICKLY.





IF I START  
SECOND-  
GUESSING  
MYSELF,  
I WON'T  
BE ABLE  
TO WRITE  
ANYTHING  
ANYMORE.

WHAT  
THE  
HELL  
AM I  
THINK-  
ING?



PROBABLY  
BEST TO  
AVOID  
ANYTHING  
CRIME-  
RELATED IF I  
DON'T WANT  
ANOTHER  
SHITSTORM  
ON MY  
HANDS.

SHOULD  
I GO  
WITH  
YOUNG  
ADULT  
FICTION  
THIS  
TIME?



A MAN  
STOOD  
BEWILDERED,  
AS IF...



ON THE  
DESERTED  
TRAIN PLAT-  
FORM OF THE  
BACKWOODS  
TOWN,

自分の  
ため息  
がやけ



LET'S SEE.  
SETTING...

THE  
COUNTRY-  
SIDE  
SOUNDS  
GOOD.

WHATEVER.  
TIME TO  
WRITE.



AS  
IF...











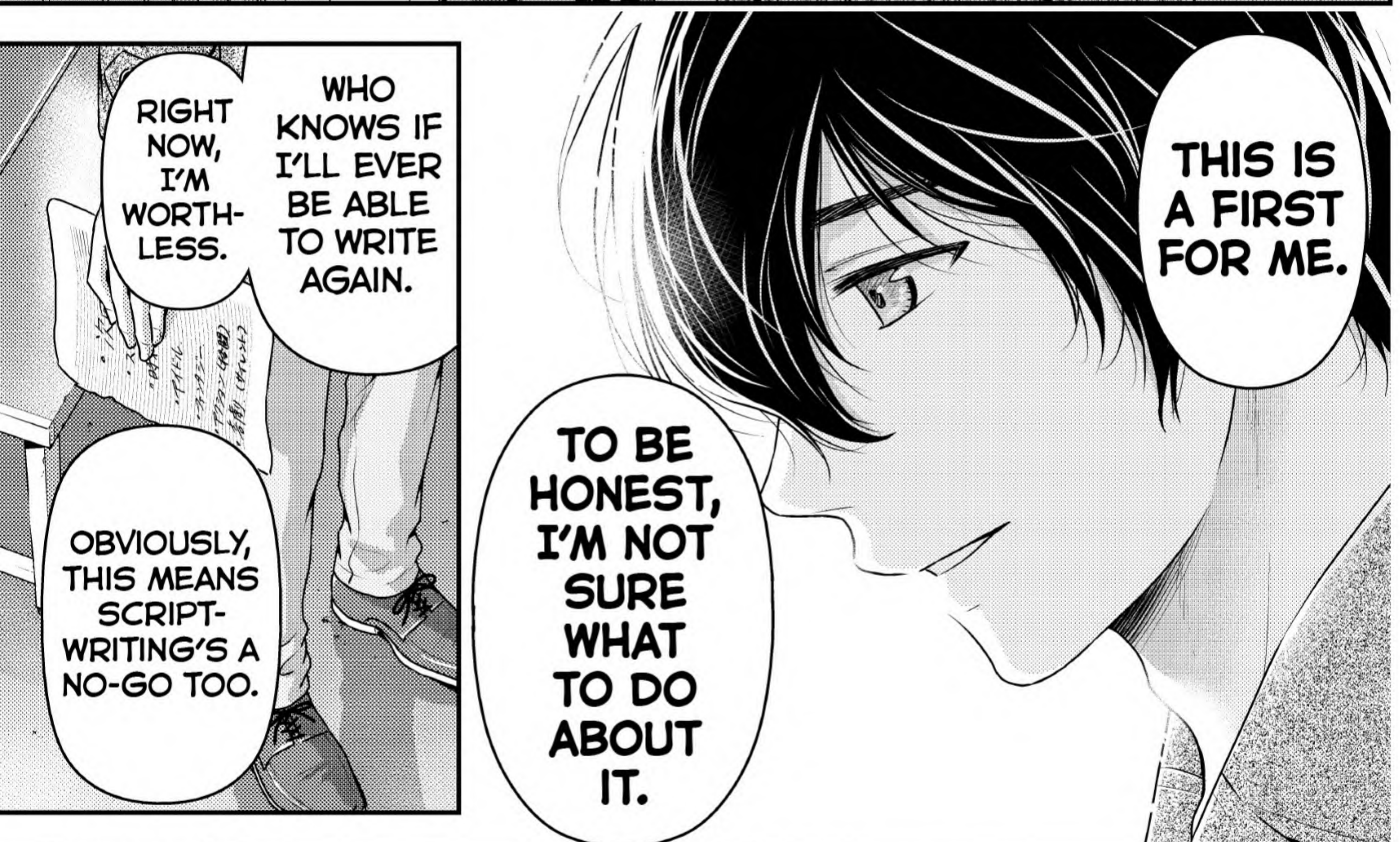
I DUNNO IF I'M BURNT OUT, DEPRESSED OVER ALL THE TROLLING, OR WHAT...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S CAUSING IT THIS TIME.

THE THING IS,

I'VE HAD BOUTS OF WRITER'S BLOCK BEFORE, BUT I ALWAYS CAME OUT OF IT AS SOON AS I GOT OVER WHATEVER WAS EATING AT ME.

MY MIND JUST... WENT BLANK.



THIS IS A FIRST FOR ME.

TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

RIGHT NOW, I'M WORTHLESS.

WHO KNOWS IF I'LL EVER BE ABLE TO WRITE AGAIN.

OBTAINING, THIS MEANS SCRIPT-WRITING'S A NO-GO TOO.



I FIGURED I'D COME GET MY STUFF AND—

THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL.

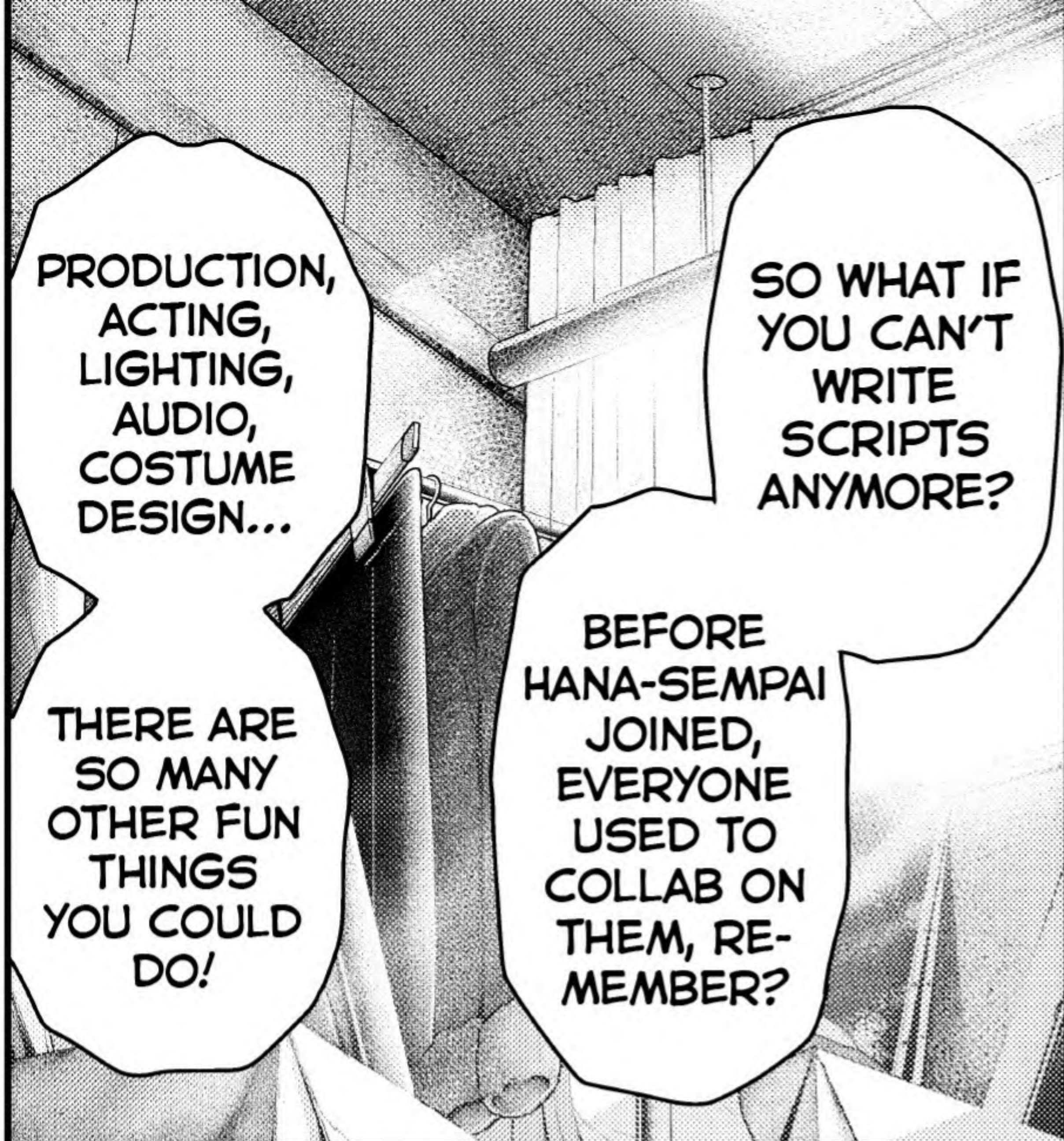
SO, WHILE THE CLUB'S STILL ON BREAK,



AS FAR AS THE CLUB'S CONCERNED,

I'M JUST DEAD WEIGHT.





PRODUCTION,  
ACTING,  
LIGHTING,  
AUDIO,  
COSTUME  
DESIGN...

THERE ARE  
SO MANY  
OTHER FUN  
THINGS  
YOU COULD  
DO!

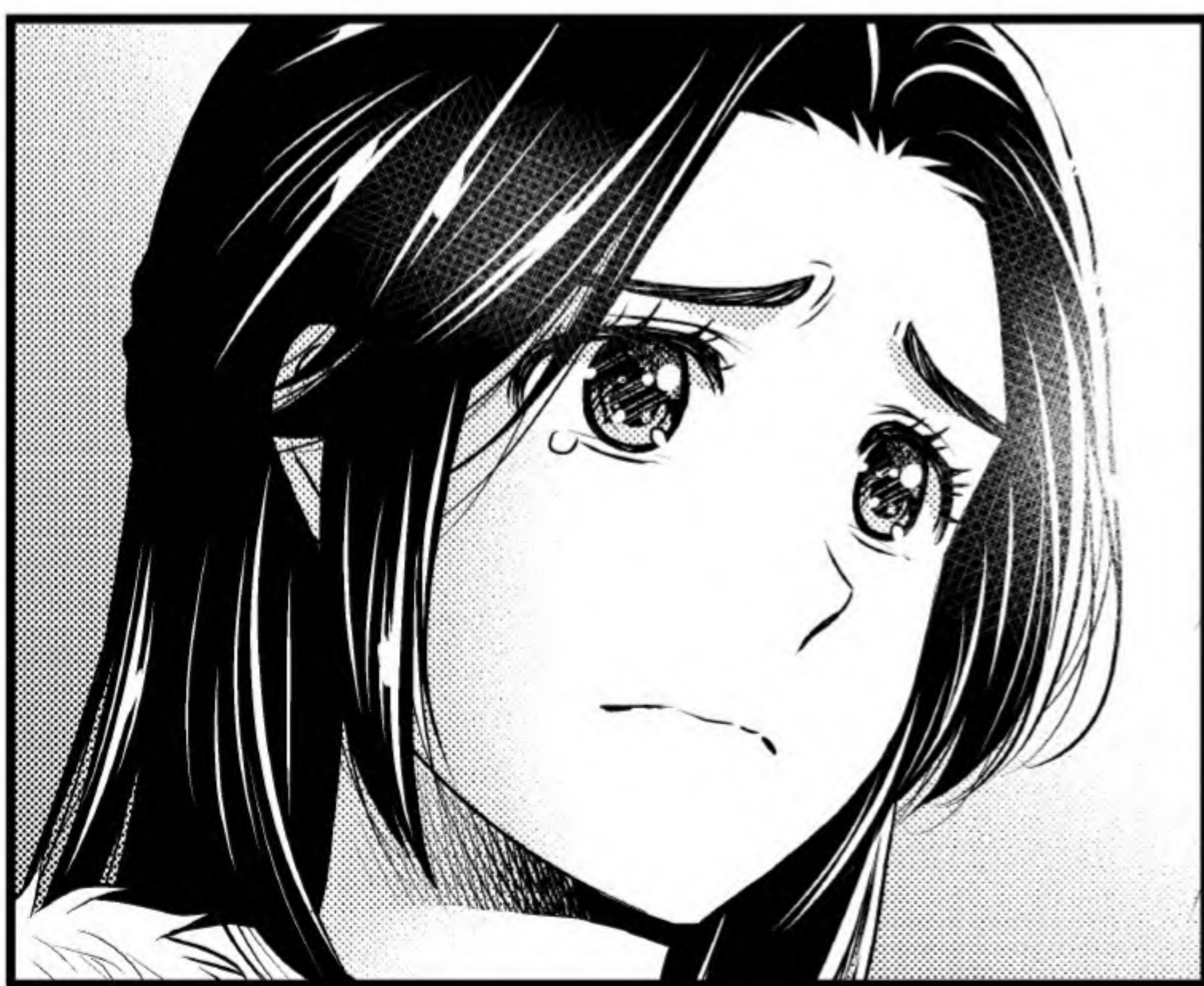
SO WHAT IF  
YOU CAN'T  
WRITE  
SCRIPTS  
ANYMORE?

BEFORE  
HANA-SEMPAI  
JOINED,  
EVERYONE  
USED TO  
COLLAB ON  
THEM, RE-  
MEMBER?



HUH  
?

NO ONE IN  
THE CLUB  
IS DEAD  
WEIGHT.



JUST  
BECAUSE  
YOU CAN'T  
WRITE,

THAT  
DOESN'T  
MEAN  
YOU'RE  
USELESS,  
FUJII-  
KUN!

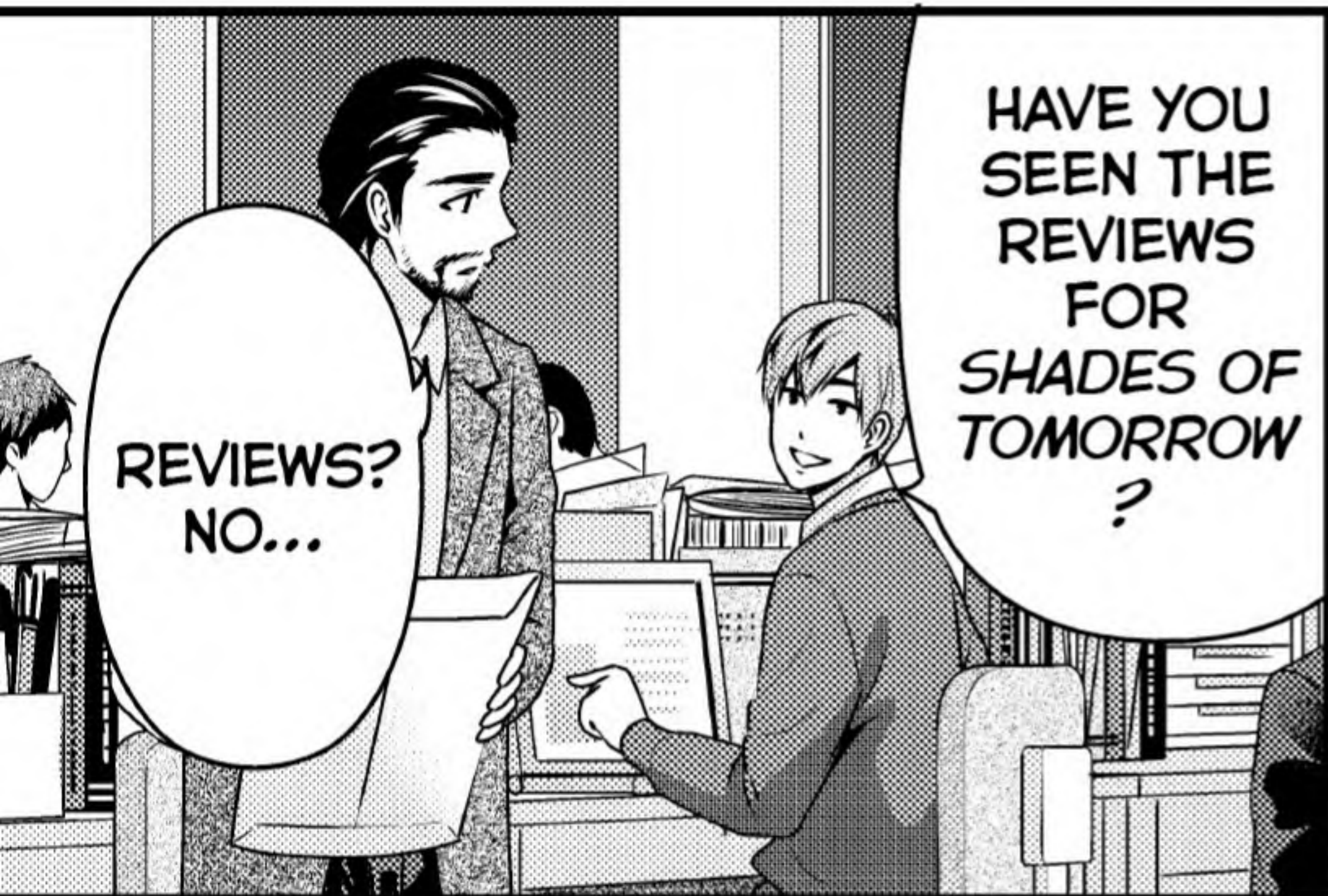




...I'LL  
TALK TO  
NARA-SAN  
ABOUT IT.

I  
GUESS  
...

THANKS.

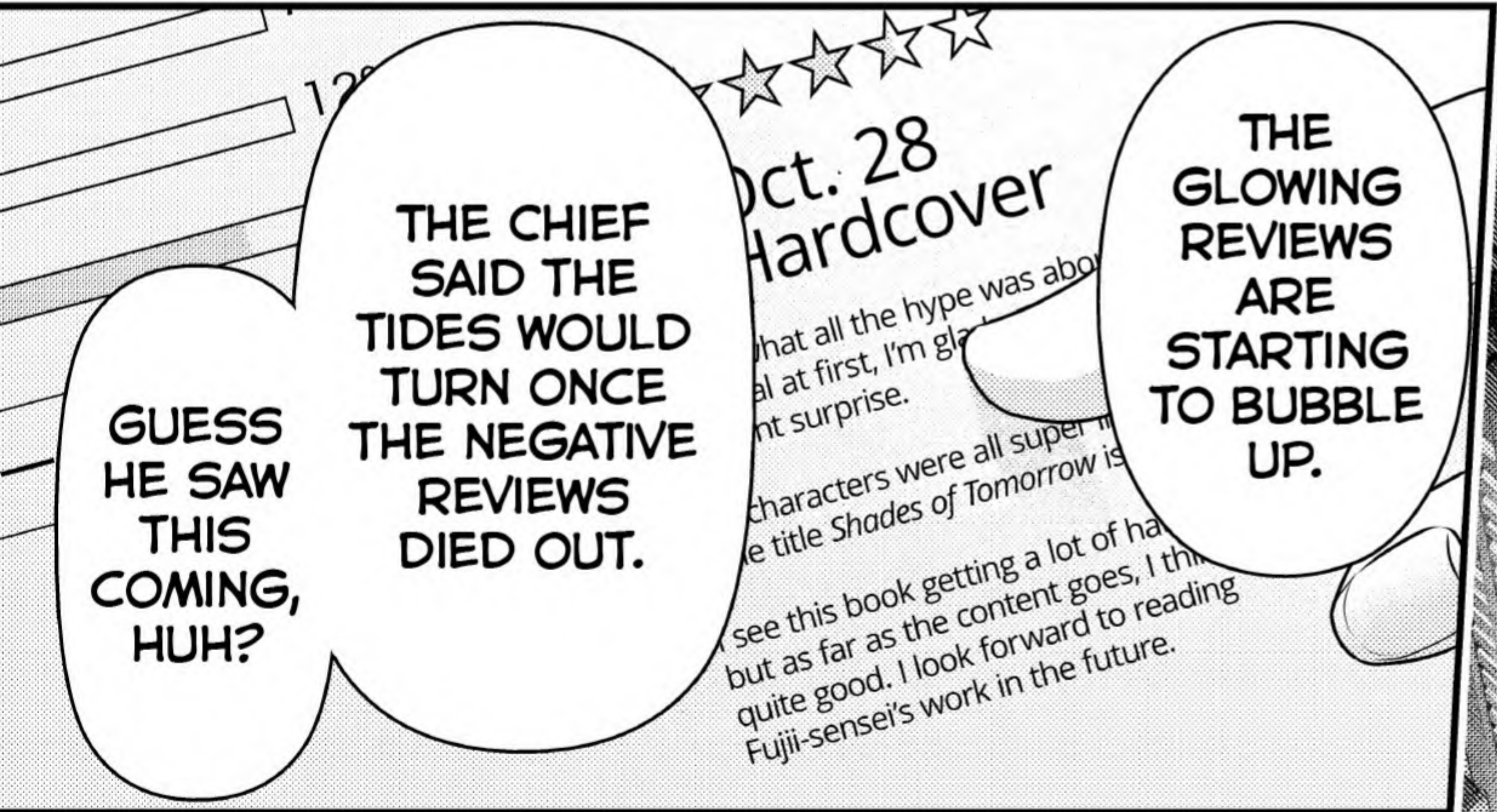


REVIEWS?  
NO...

HAVE YOU  
SEEN THE  
REVIEWS  
FOR  
SHADES OF  
TOMORROW  
?



TSU-  
TAYA-  
SAN.



GUESS  
HE SAW  
THIS  
COMING,  
HUH?

THE CHIEF  
SAID THE  
TIDES WOULD  
TURN ONCE  
THE NEGATIVE  
REVIEWS  
DIED OUT.

Oct. 28  
Hardcover  
...that all the hype was about  
...at first, I'm glad  
...nt surprise.  
...characters were all super  
...e title *Shades of Tomorrow* is  
...see this book getting a lot of ha  
...but as far as the content goes, I thi  
...quite good. I look forward to reading  
Fujii-sensei's work in the future.

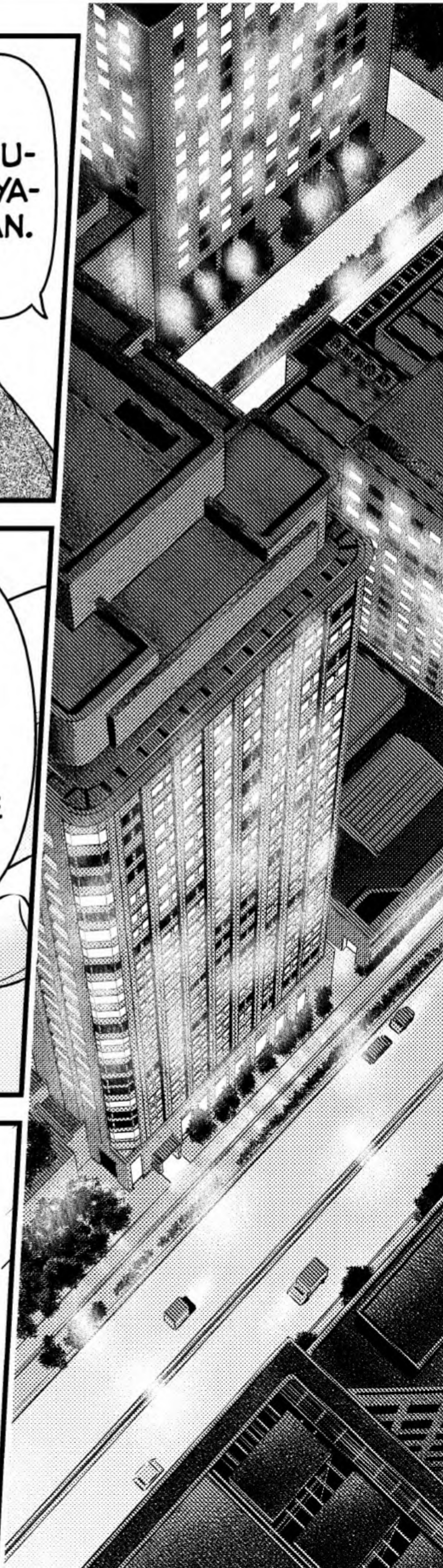
THE  
GLOWING  
REVIEWS  
ARE  
STARTING  
TO BUBBLE  
UP.



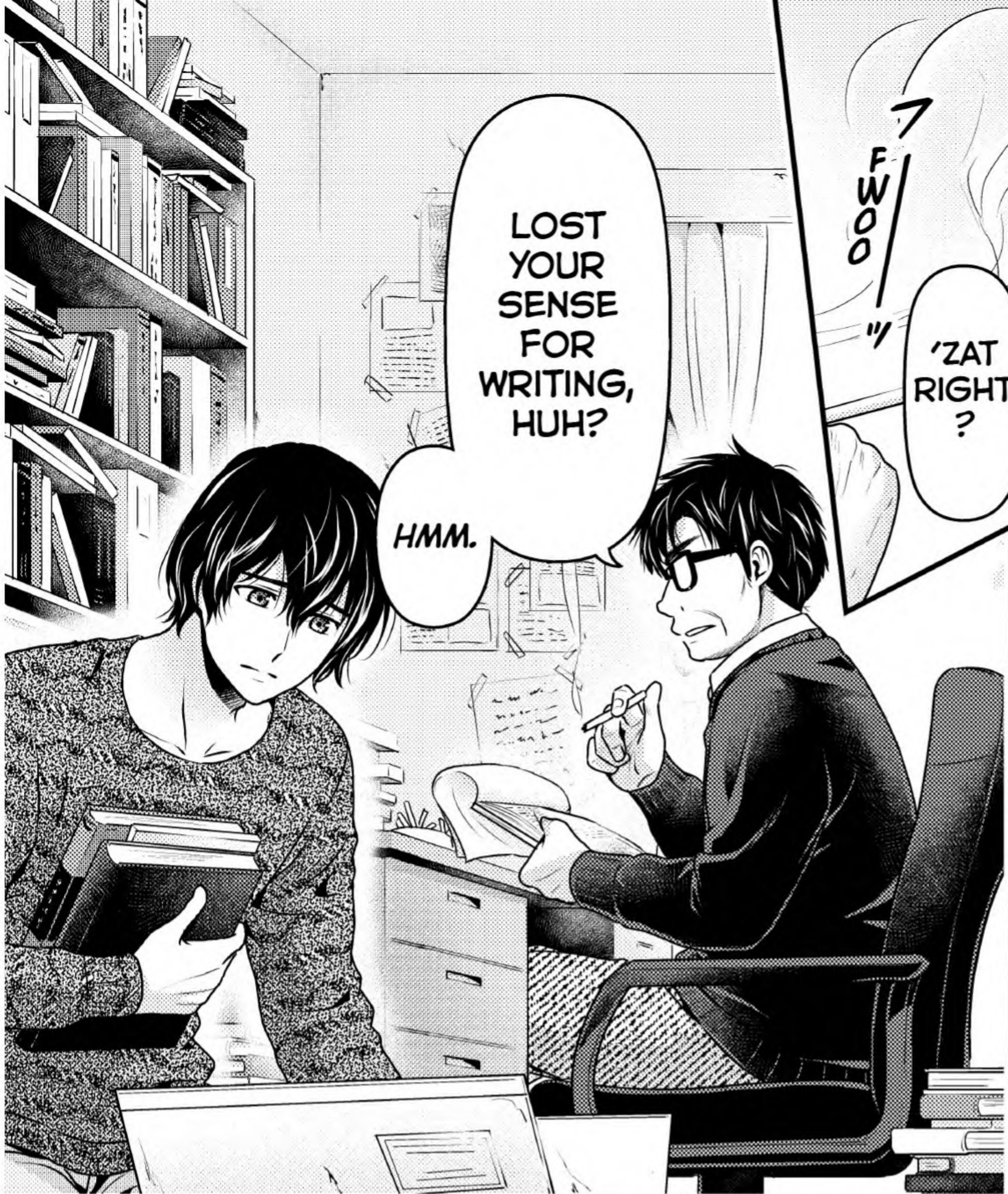
THE  
PRICE WE  
PAID WAS  
FAR TOO  
STEEP.

EVEN  
SO,

...





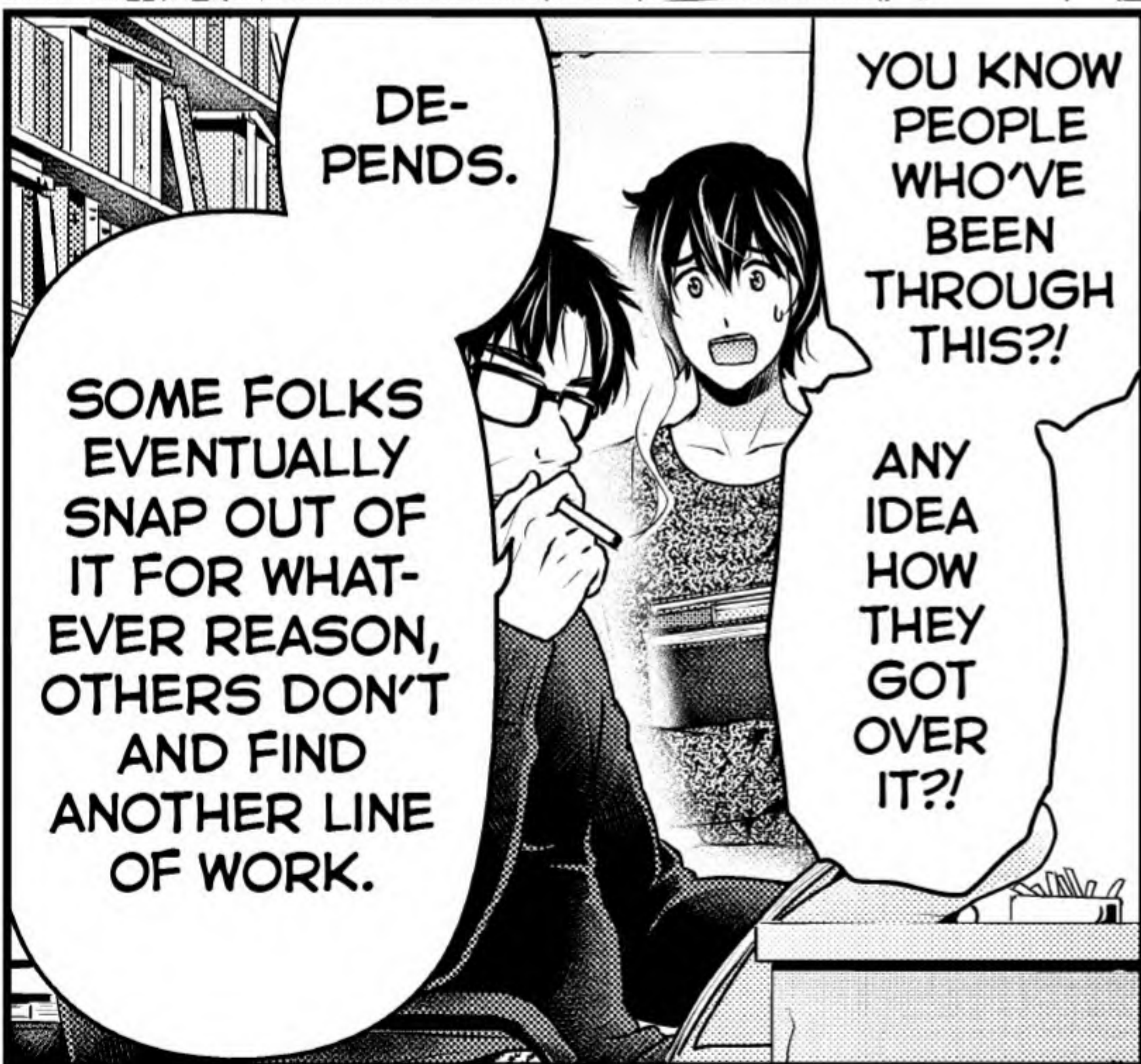


LOST  
YOUR  
SENSE  
FOR  
WRITING,  
HUH?

HMM.

F  
W  
O

'ZAT  
RIGHT  
?



DE-  
PENDS.

SOME FOLKS  
EVENTUALLY  
SNAP OUT OF  
IT FOR WHAT-  
EVER REASON,  
OTHERS DON'T  
AND FIND  
ANOTHER LINE  
OF WORK.

YOU KNOW  
PEOPLE  
WHO'VE  
BEEN  
THROUGH  
THIS?!

ANY  
IDEA  
HOW  
THEY  
GOT  
OVER  
IT?!



WELL,  
I WON'T  
SAY IT  
HAPPENS  
ALL THE  
TIME,

BUT IT'S  
COMMON  
ENOUGH  
IN THIS  
INDUSTRY.



AT ANY  
RATE,  
JUST TRY  
NOT TO  
THINK  
ABOUT IT  
FOR NOW.

...

F  
W  
O



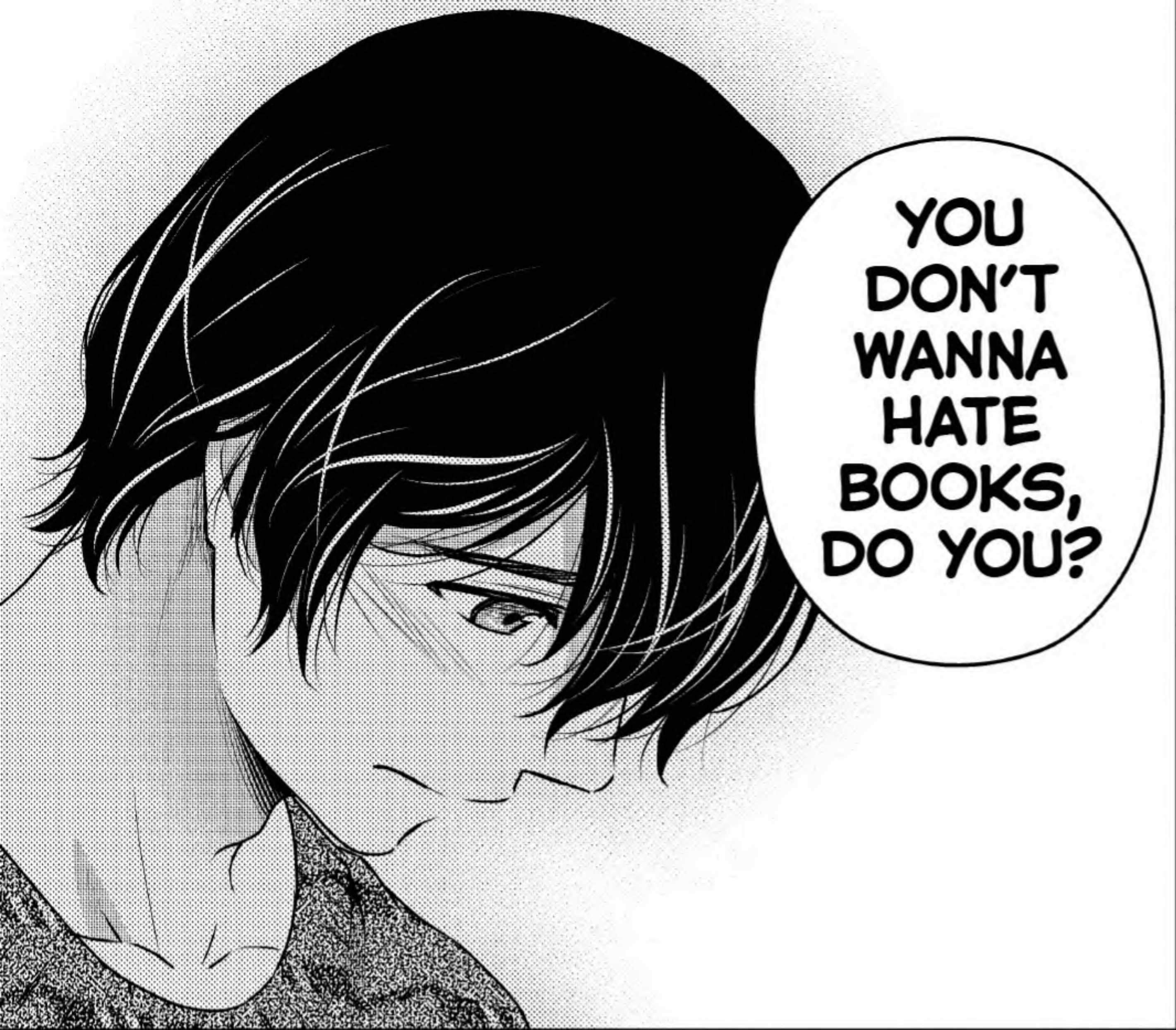
ER...



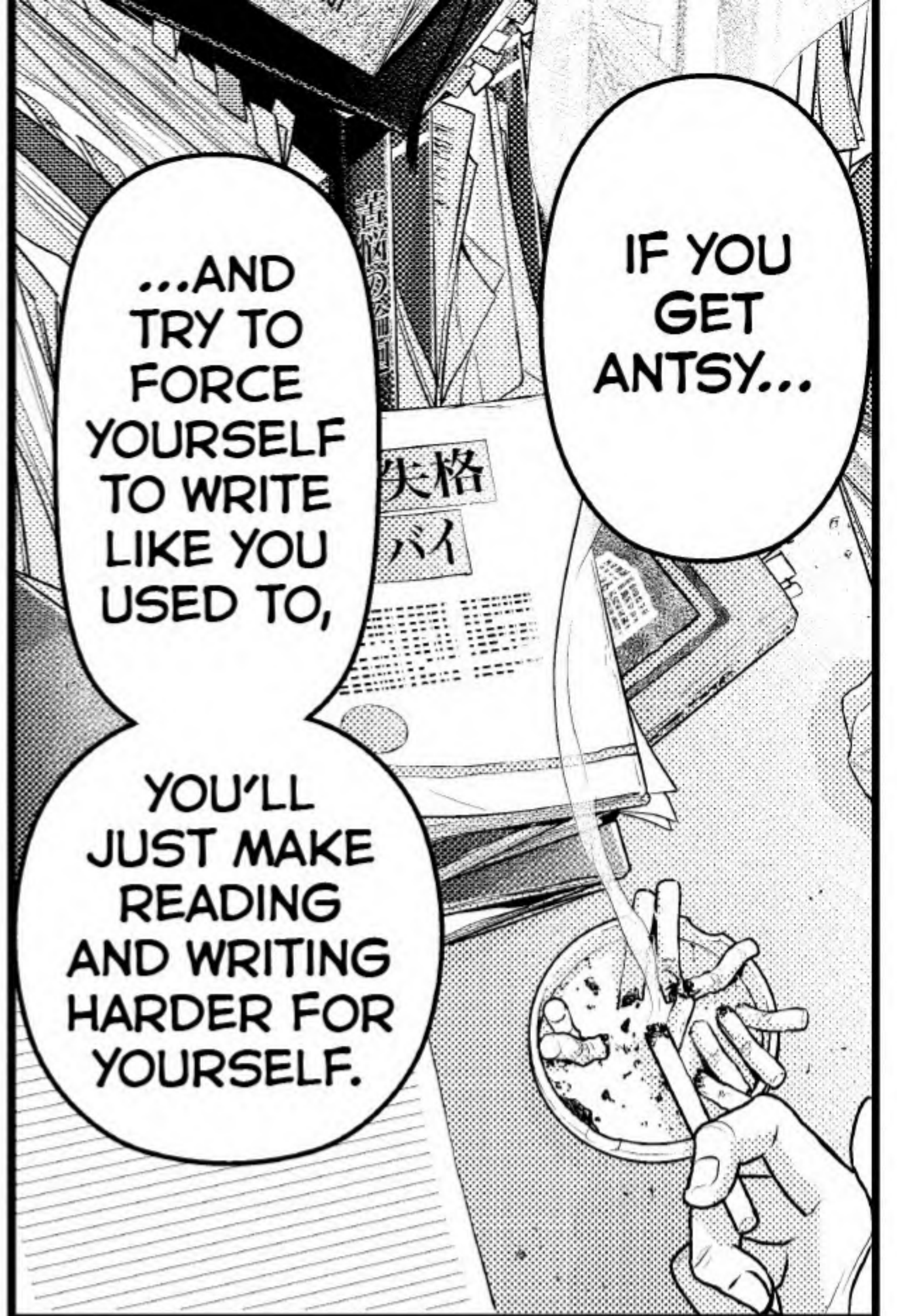
IT FEELS  
LIKE I  
FORGOT  
HOW TO  
RIDE A BIKE  
ALL OF A  
SUDDEN.

LIKE,  
"HOW HAVE  
I BEEN  
PEDDLING  
ALL THIS  
TIME?"





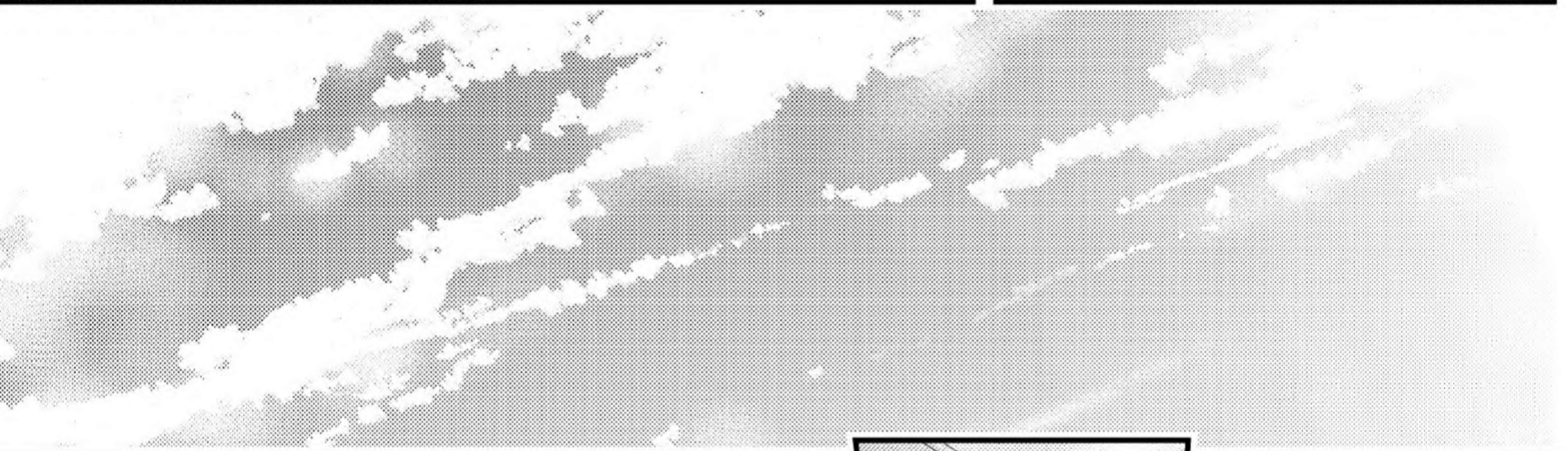
YOU  
DON'T  
WANNA  
HATE  
BOOKS,  
DO YOU?



...AND  
TRY TO  
FORCE  
YOURSELF  
TO WRITE  
LIKE YOU  
USED TO,

IF YOU  
GET  
ANTS...Y...

YOU'LL  
JUST MAKE  
READING  
AND WRITING  
HARDER FOR  
YOURSELF.



FOR  
THE  
MOCHI:

RED  
BEAN  
PASTE  
OR  
KINAKO\*  
?

KINA-  
KO!

\*KINAKO: ROASTED  
SOYBEAN FLOUR.





YEAH.

WATCHING  
THIS MAKES  
ME FEEL  
LIKE THE  
NEW YEAR'S  
FINALLY  
ARRIVED.

THIS GAME  
SHOW'S  
BECOME A  
REGULAR  
PART OF  
NEW YEAR'S,  
HUH?

...SEEMS  
KINDA  
DOWN.



NATSUO-  
KUN...



IT HAD TO  
BE A SHOCK  
GETTING  
BLINDSIDED  
LIKE THAT BY  
A GIRL HE  
THOUGHT  
WAS JUST  
A FRIEND.

WELL, HE  
ALREADY  
HAS RUI  
AFTER ALL.



IS WHAT  
HAPPENED  
ON CHRIST-  
MAS IS  
STILL  
BUGGING  
HIM?



I  
WONDER  
HOW...

...HE  
FEELS  
ABOUT  
IT.





IS IT  
JUST ME,  
OR DOES  
SITTING  
UNDER THE  
KOTATSU\*

...MAKE  
EVERY-  
THING FEEL  
WAY MORE  
INTENSE?

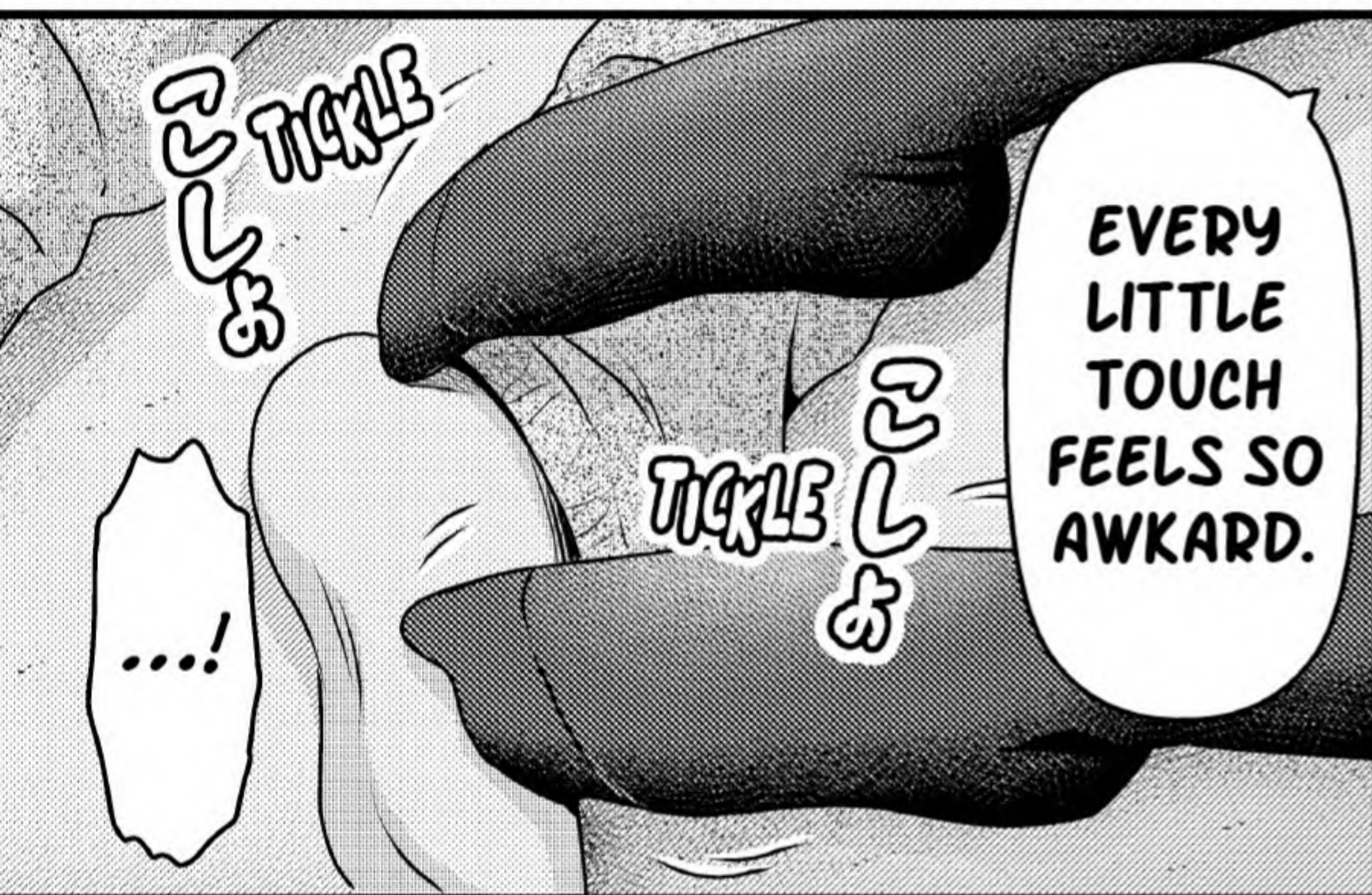
!



NO  
BIG-  
GIE.

OH.  
SOR-  
RY.

\*KOTATSU: A LOW-RESTING TABLE COVERED BY A HEAVY BLANKET AND EQUIPPED WITH A HEATER UNDERNEATH.



EVERY  
LITTLE  
TOUCH  
FEELS SO  
AWKARD.

...!



HI-  
HINA-  
NEE?

LIKE...YOU  
JUST FEEL  
SUPER  
TICKLISH,  
Y'KNOW?



IT'S BEEN  
SO LONG  
SINCE I'VE  
HEARD YOU  
LAUGH.

I  
ALMOST  
FORGOT  
WHAT IT  
SOUNDED  
LIKE.



THERE  
WE GO!



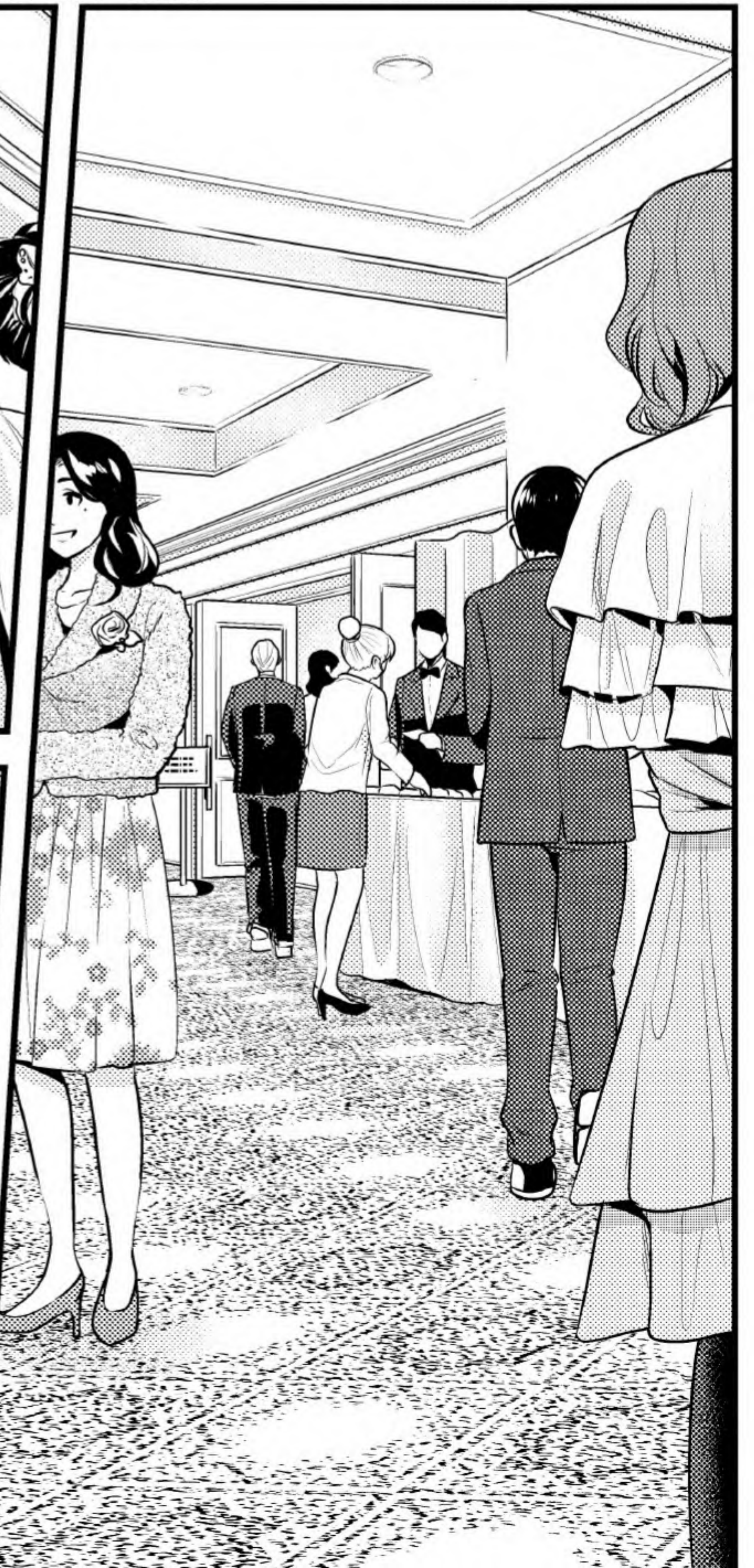
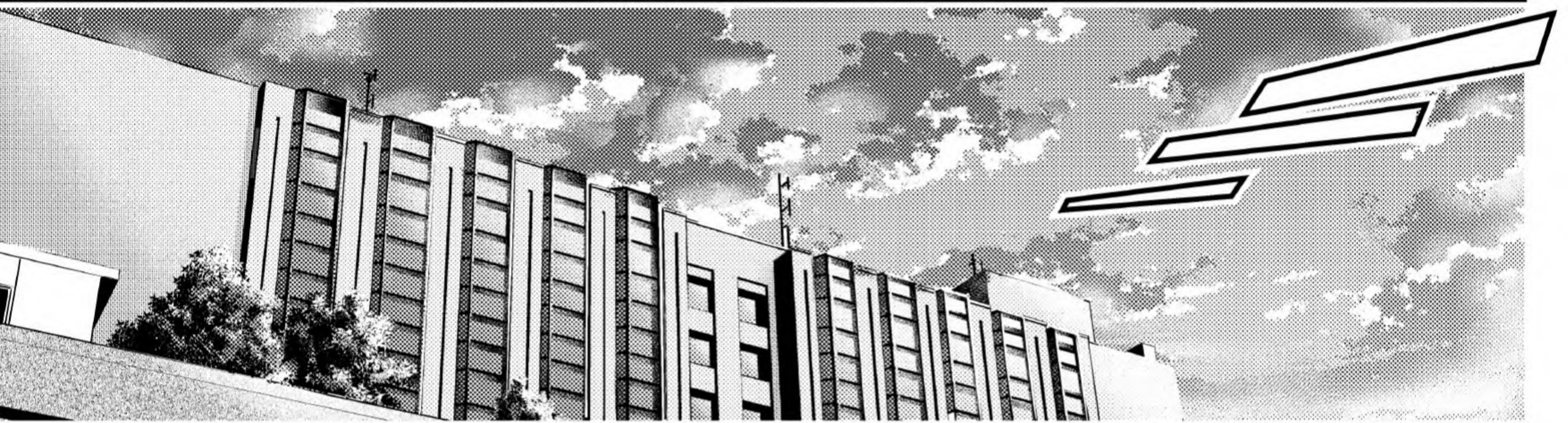
PFF  
HA  
HA!  
STOP!

THAT  
TICKLES!

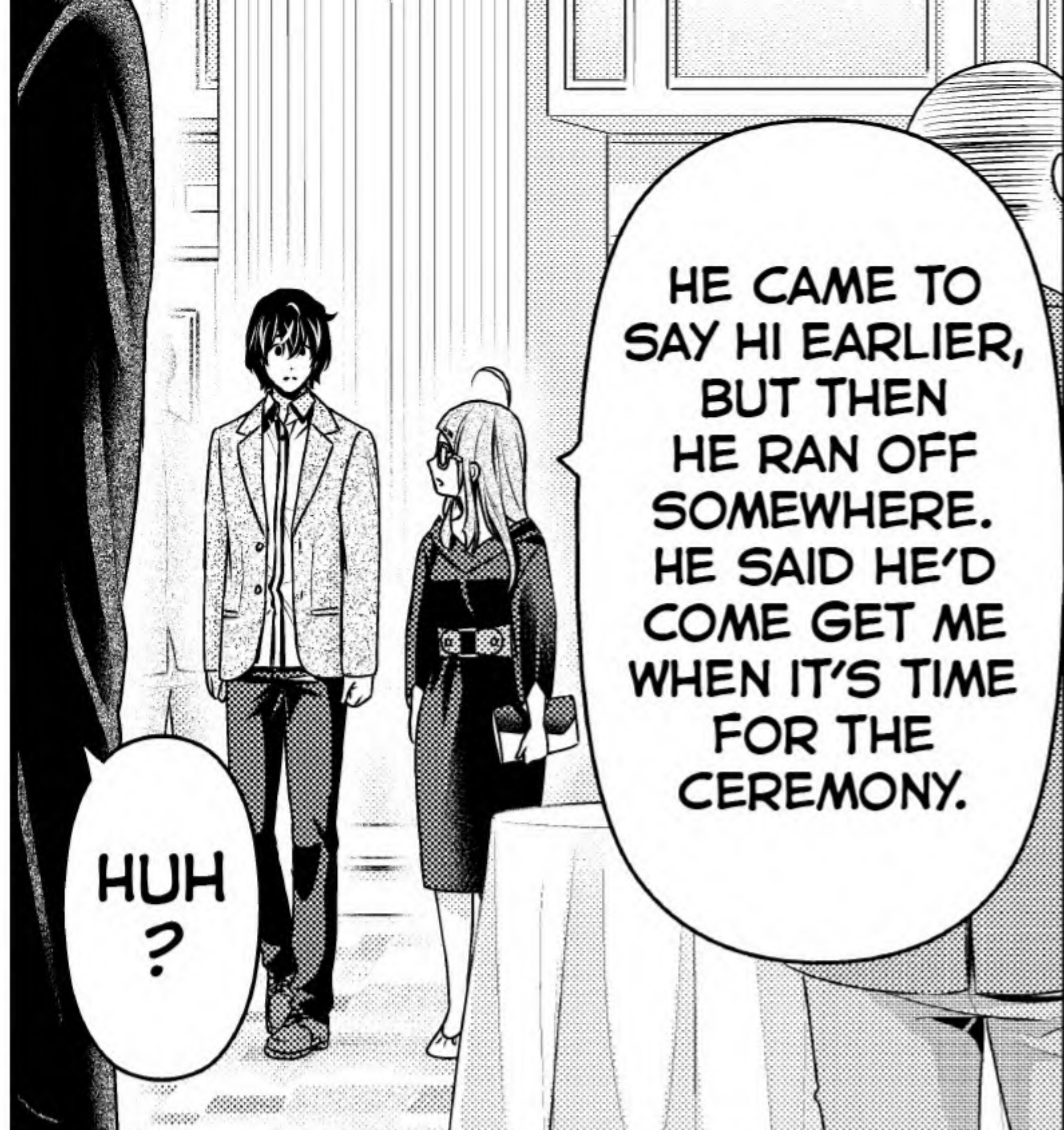












HUH ?

HE CAME TO SAY HI EARLIER, BUT THEN HE RAN OFF SOMEWHERE. HE SAID HE'D COME GET ME WHEN IT'S TIME FOR THE CEREMONY.



SORRY I'M LATE. I GOT HELD UP AT THE STATION.

ARE YOU ALONE? WHERE'S YOUR EDITOR?

FUJII-KUN!

THANKS FOR COMING!



HANA-SEMPAI ASKED ME TO BE HERE FOR MORAL SUPPORT.

OH, I SEE. CONGRATULATIONS ON WINNING FIRST PLACE, HANAMURA-SAN.

HEY, TSUTAYA-SAN.



FUJII-KUN?

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?

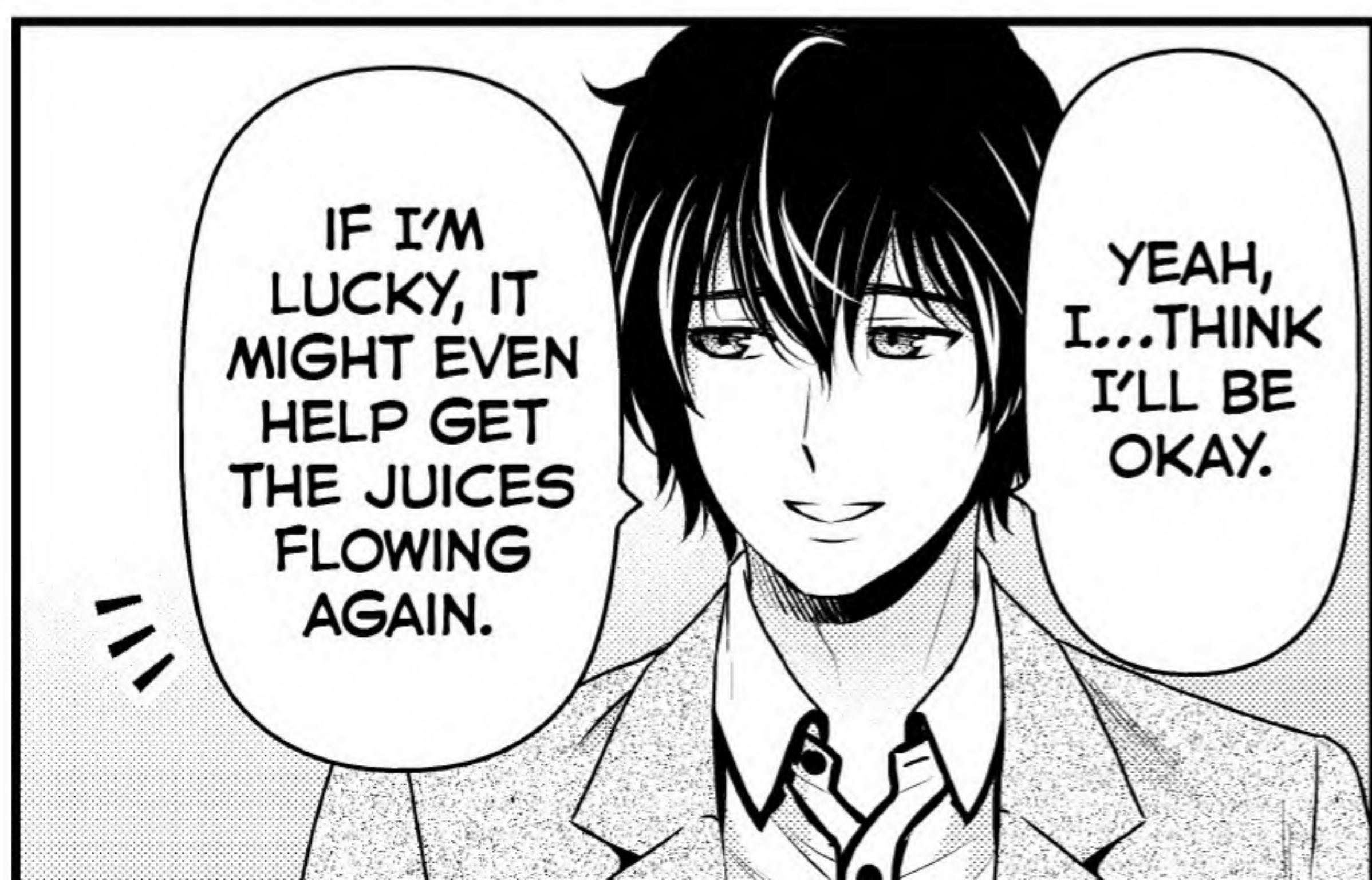


...TO ATTEND THIS KIND OF THING RIGHT NOW.

IT MUST BE HARD FOR YOU...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?

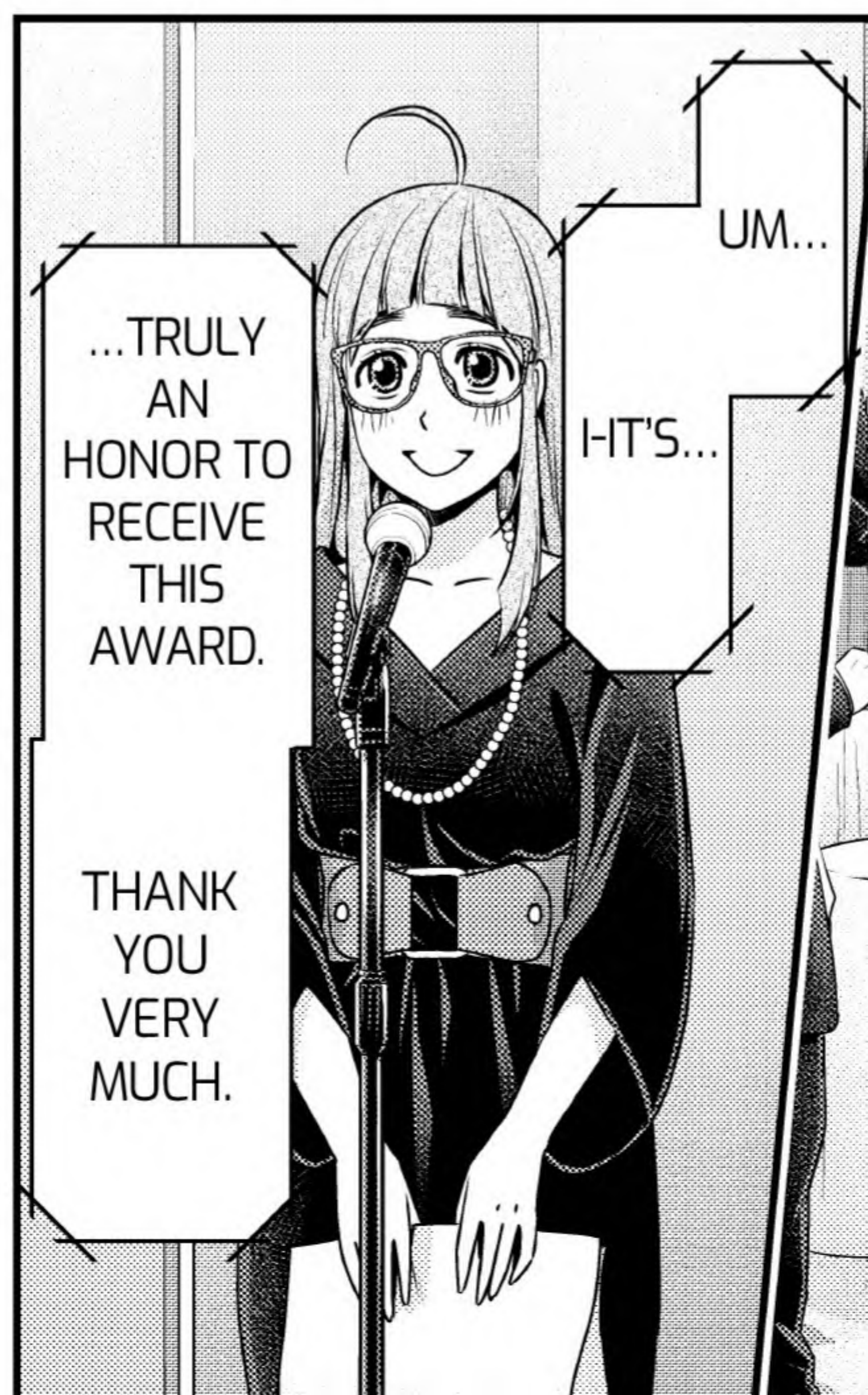
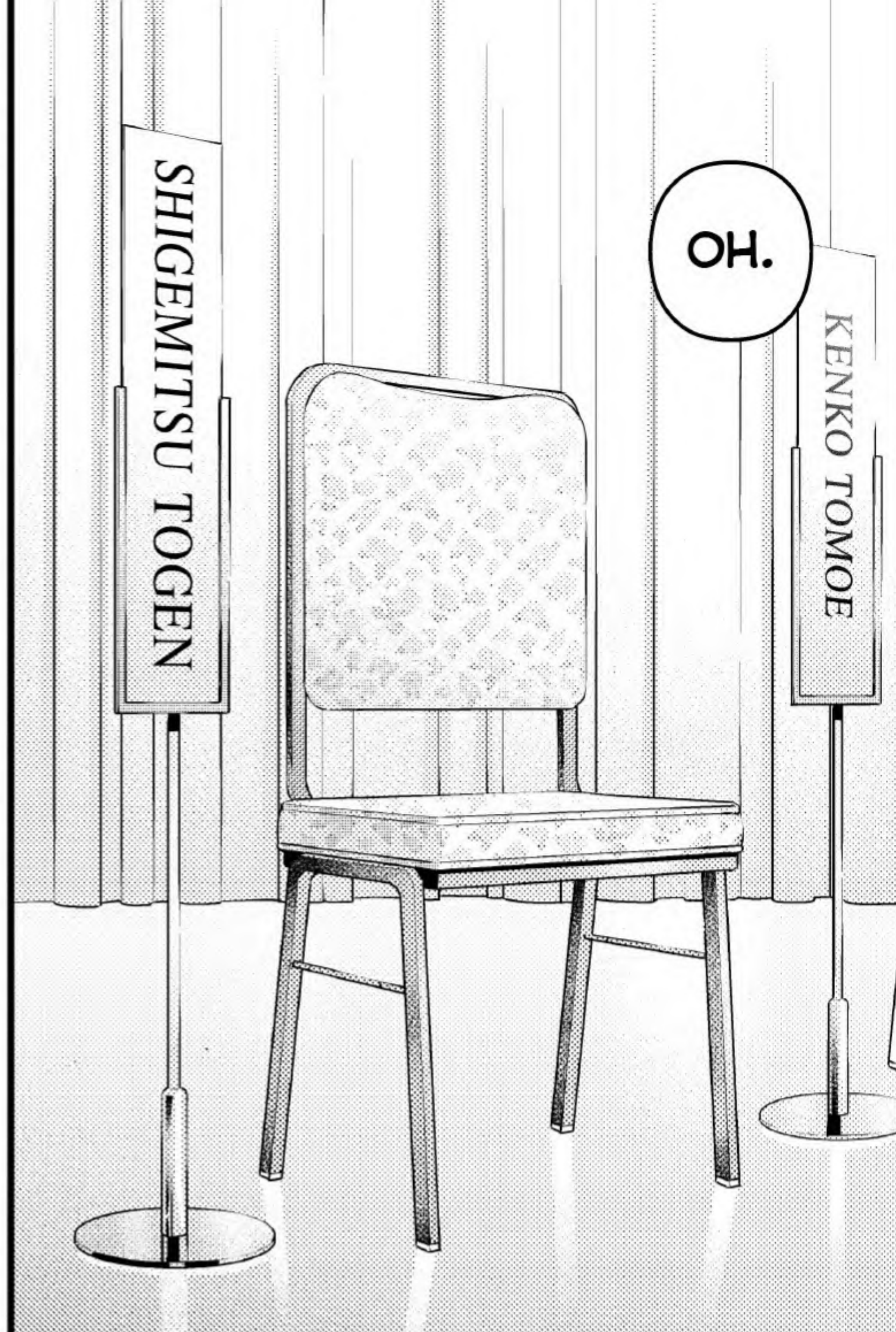
YOU OKAY ?



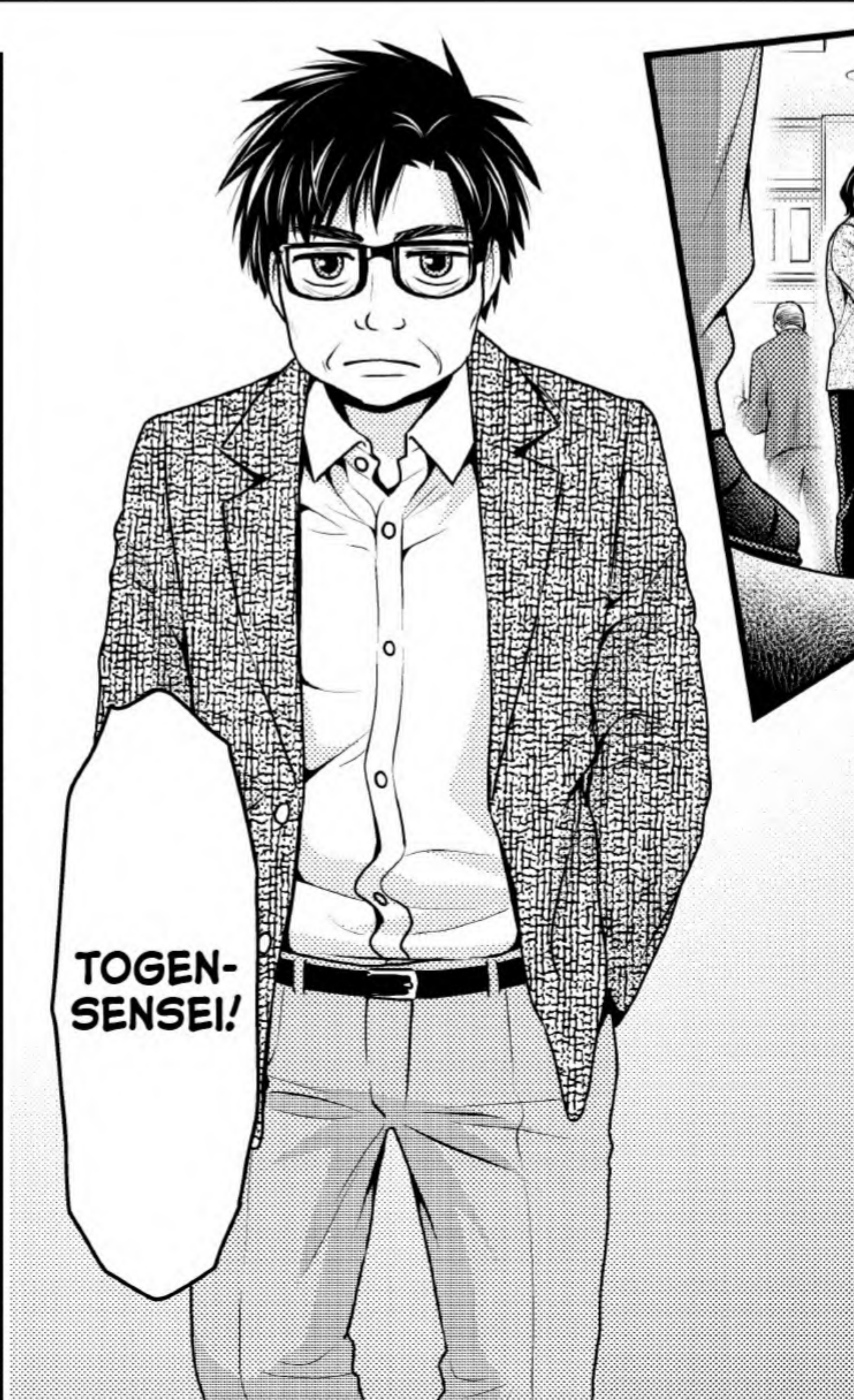
IF I'M LUCKY, IT MIGHT EVEN HELP GET THE JUICES FLOWING AGAIN.

YEAH, I...THINK I'LL BE OKAY.













THAT, AND THE WRITING WAS SUMMA THE HIGHEST QUALITY I'VE SEEN FROM A NEW AUTHOR LATELY.

SEN-SEI!

SO, I FIGURED I'D STOP BY AND CHAT FOR A BIT.



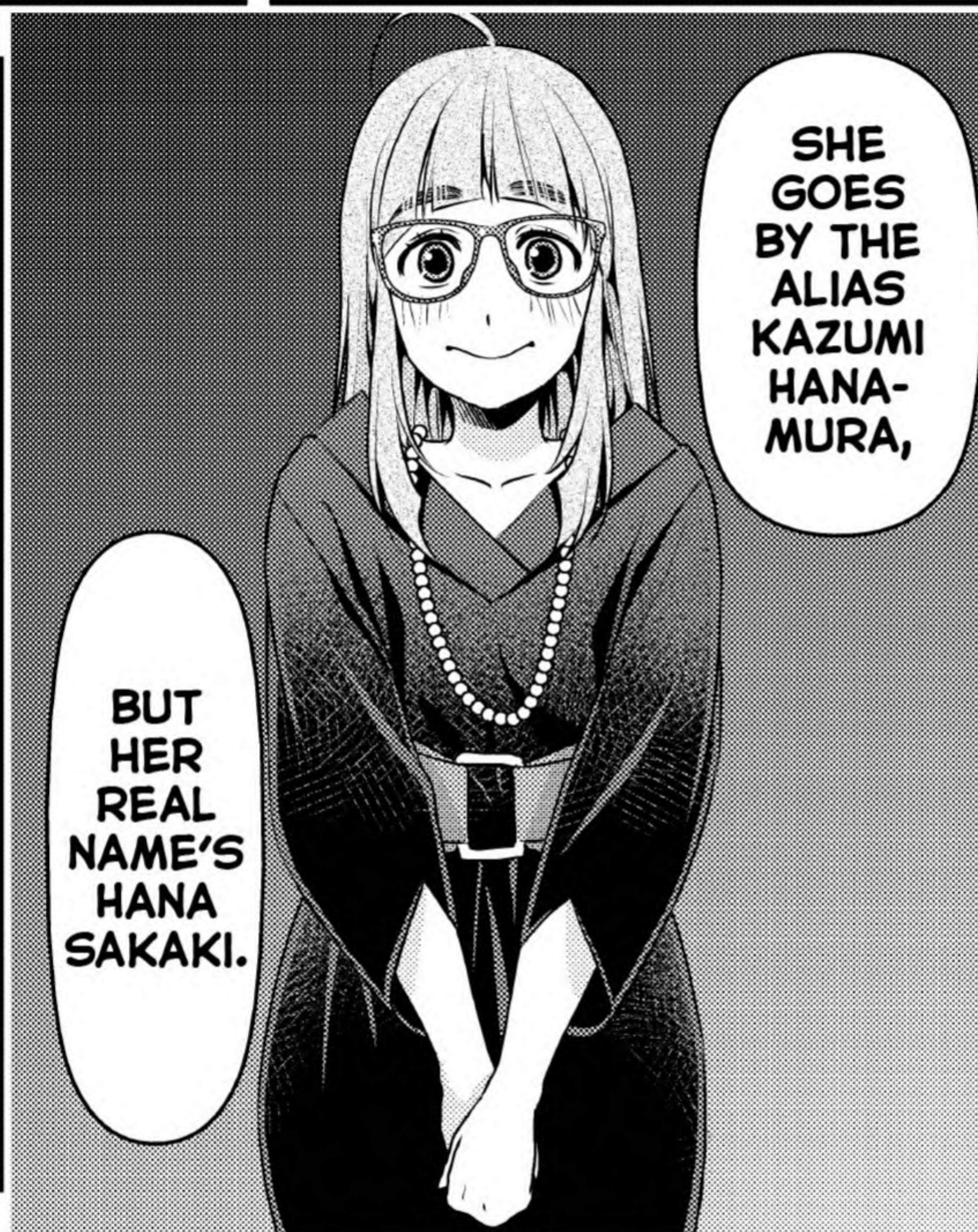
BUT, WELL... THE WINNER THIS TIME'S A FRIEND OF YOURS, RIGHT?

WHAT KINDA ADVICE DO THEY EXPECT ME TO GIVE A BUNCHA NEWBIES I CAN'T RELATE TO IDEOLOGICALLY OR STYLISTICALLY?

YOU BET YOUR ASS I DO. THEY ALWAYS MAKE ME GIVE A SPEECH AT THESE DEALS.



I-I'M A HUGE FAN! I'VE READ ALL YOUR BOOKS!



BUT HER REAL NAME'S HANA SAKAKI.

SHE GOES BY THE ALIAS KAZUMI HANA-MURA,



I-IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU!

SEMPAI, THIS IS SHIGEMITSU TOGEN-SENSEI.

SENSEI, THIS IS MY UPPER-CLASSMAN FROM THE DRAMA CLUB.



UM... YES, WHY?

YOUR LAST NAME, SAKAKI.

IS THAT SPELLED WITH THE SAME CHARACTER FOR EVER-GREEN?!

SEN-SEI?

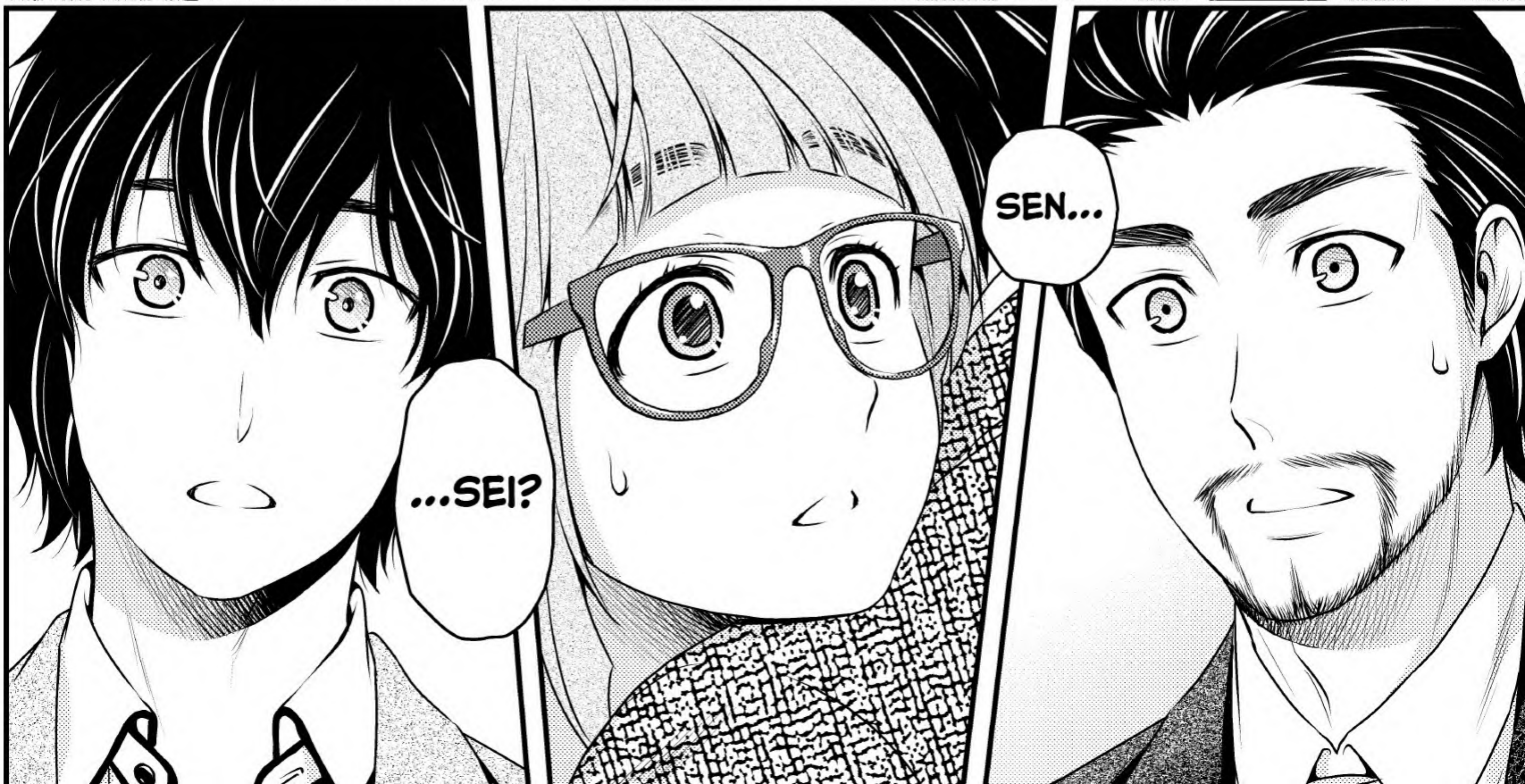


HANA

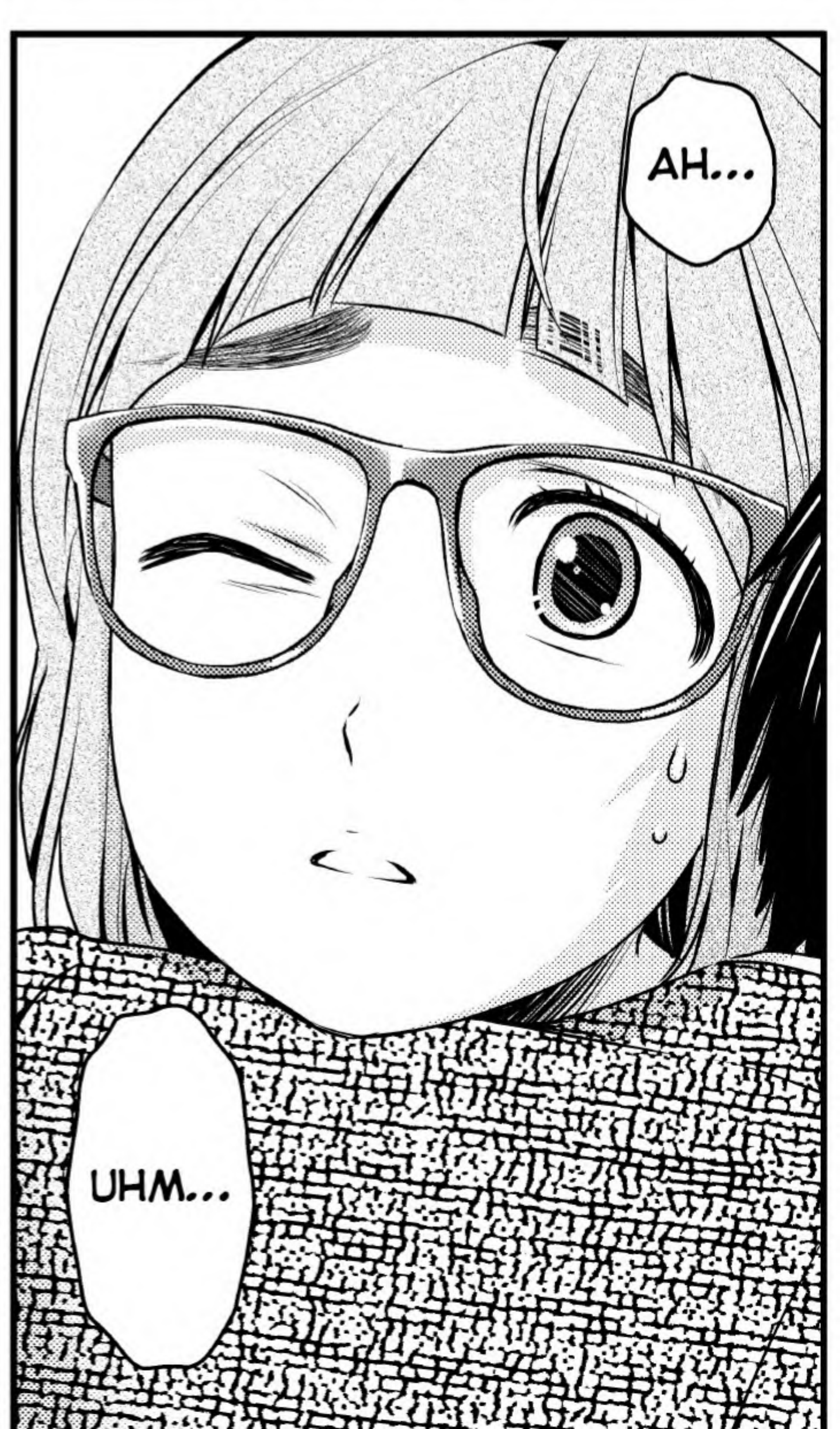
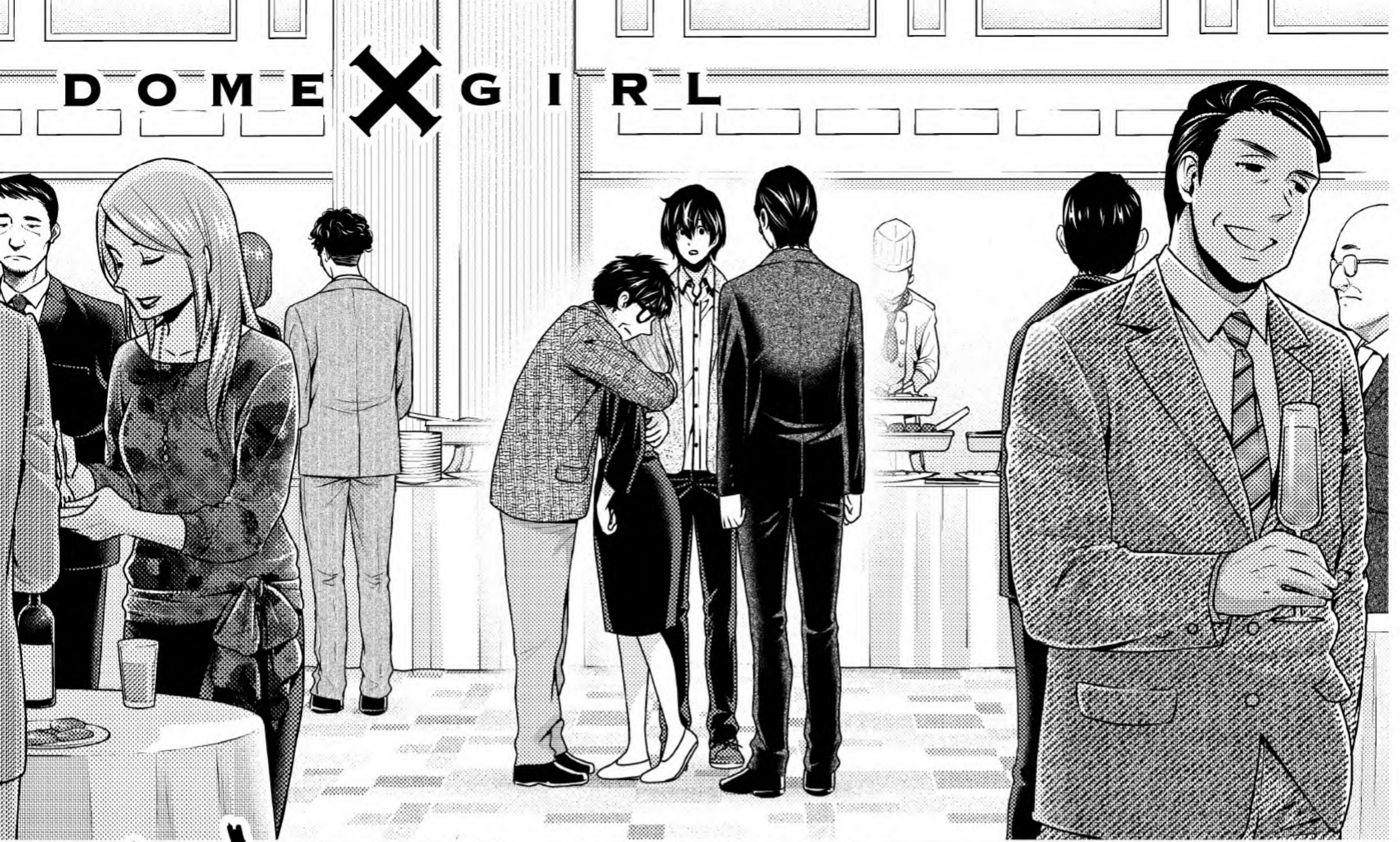
SA-KAKI?

DID YOU SAY,

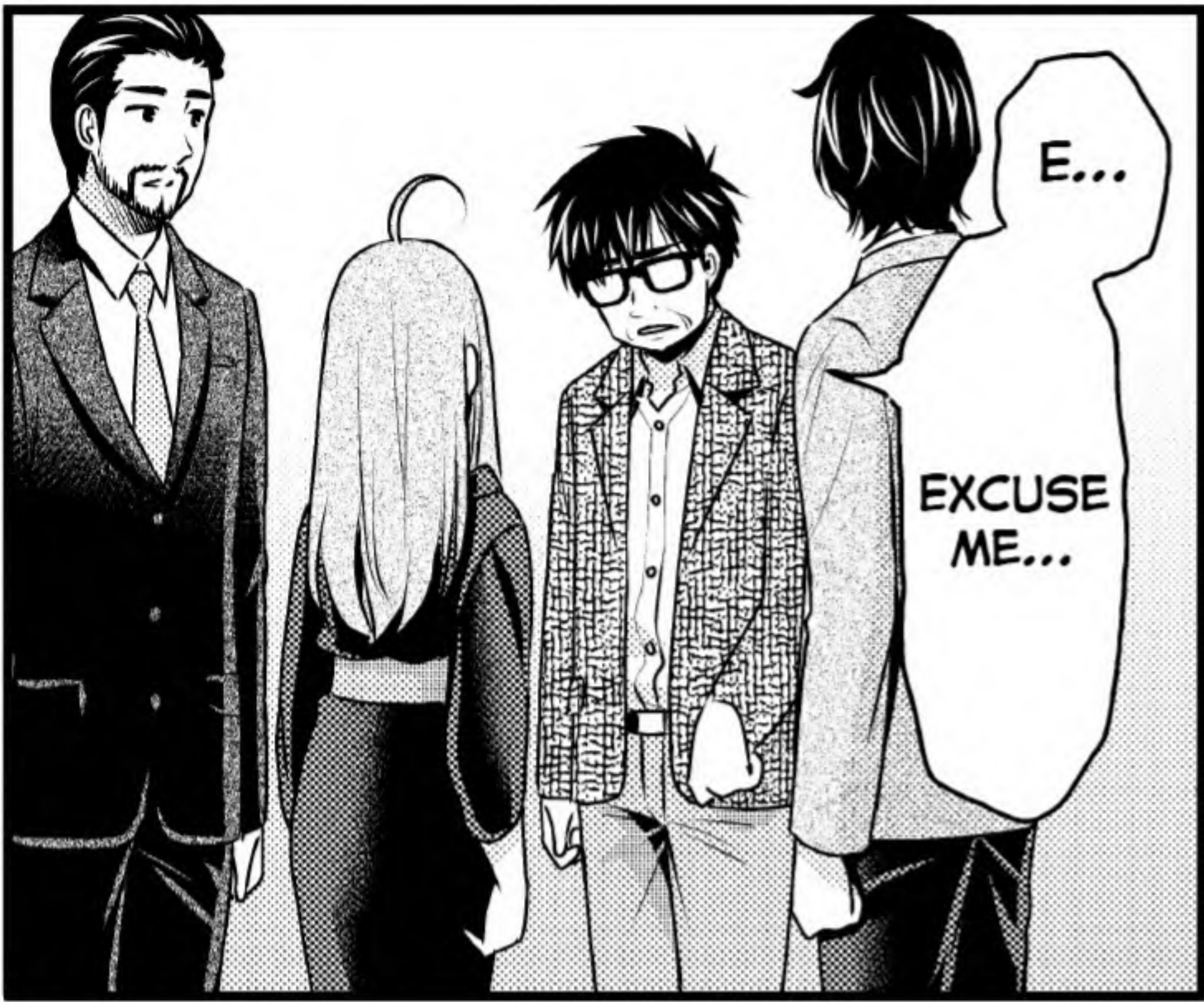
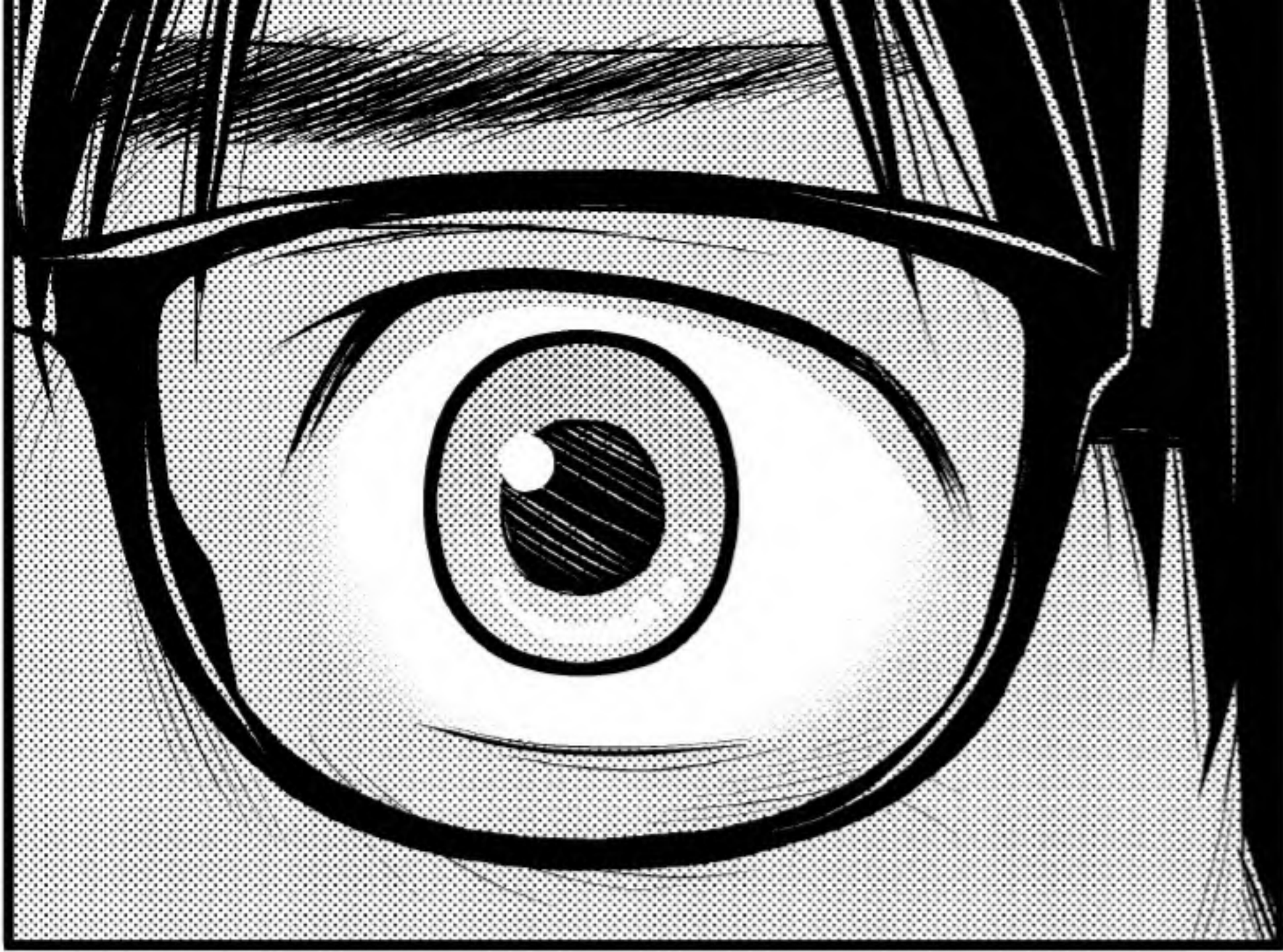






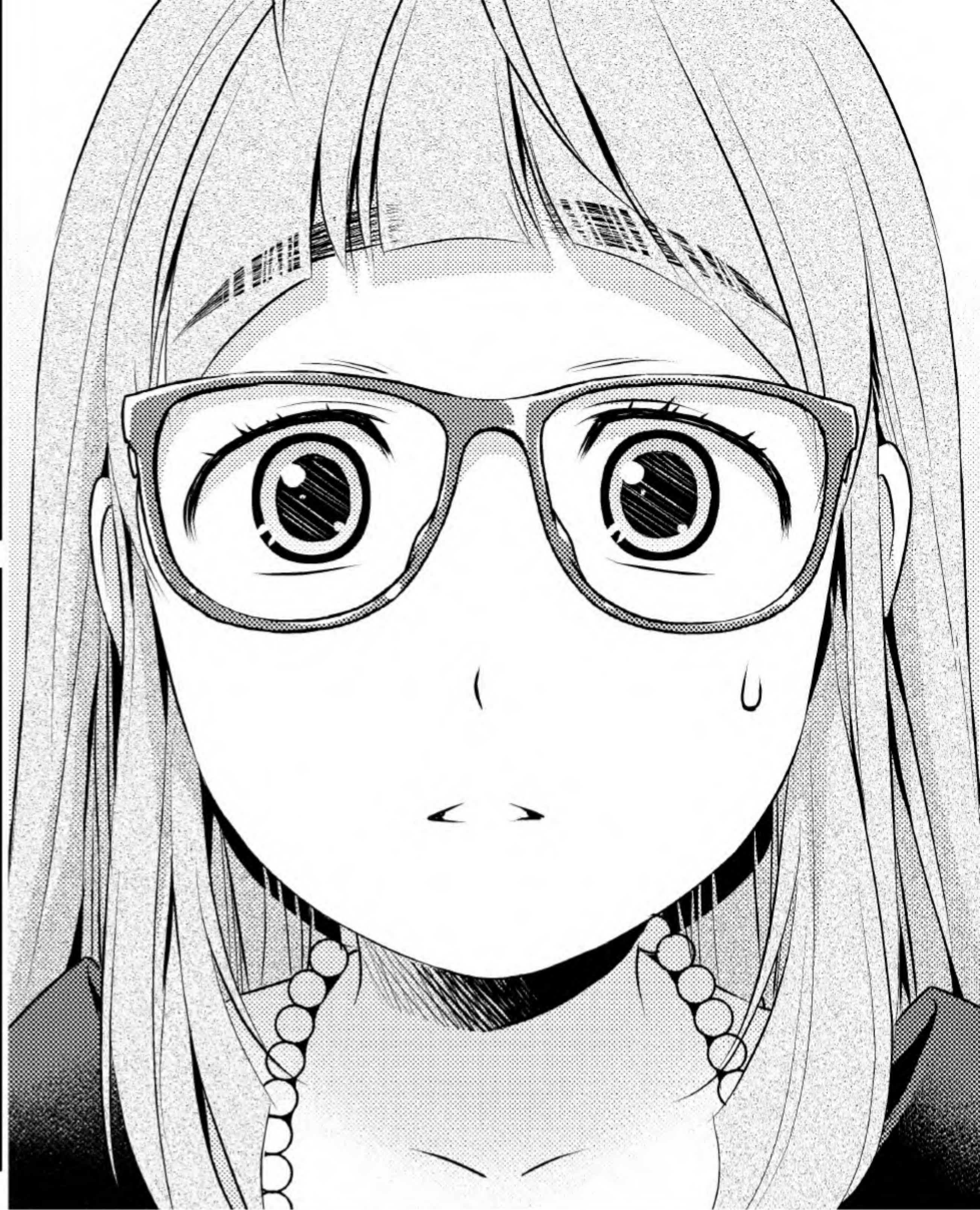






E...

EXCUSE  
ME...



THEN  
WHY...?

NO...

DO YOU TWO  
KNOW EACH  
OTHER, SENSEI?



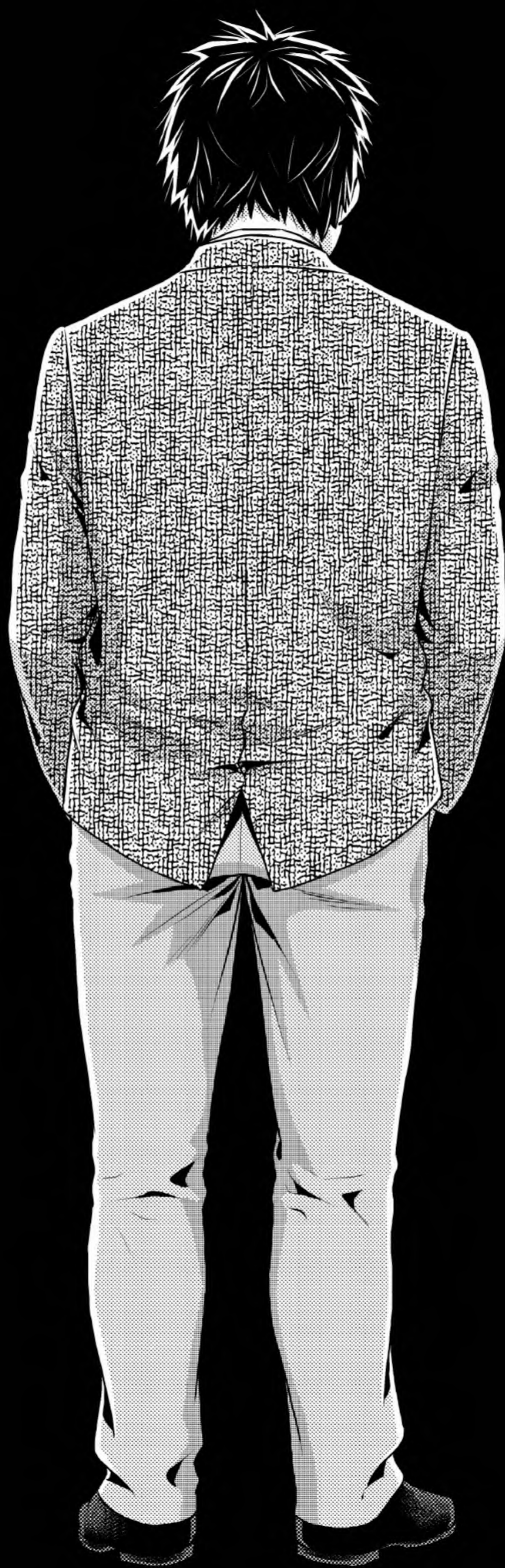
...I'M  
FEELING  
KIND OF  
UNDER THE  
WEATHER.

I'M  
SORRY.  
IT'S  
JUST...

ALL  
RIGHT.

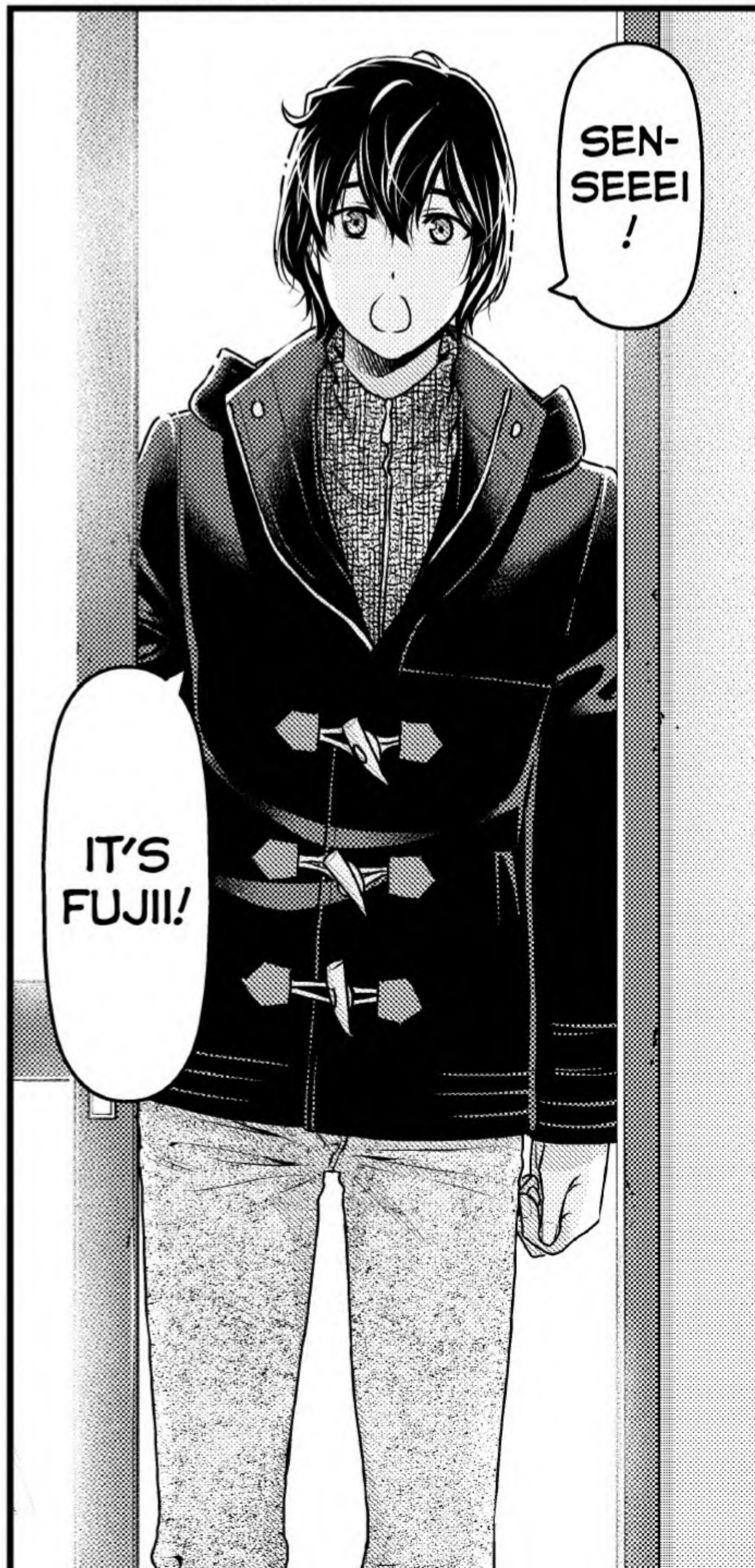
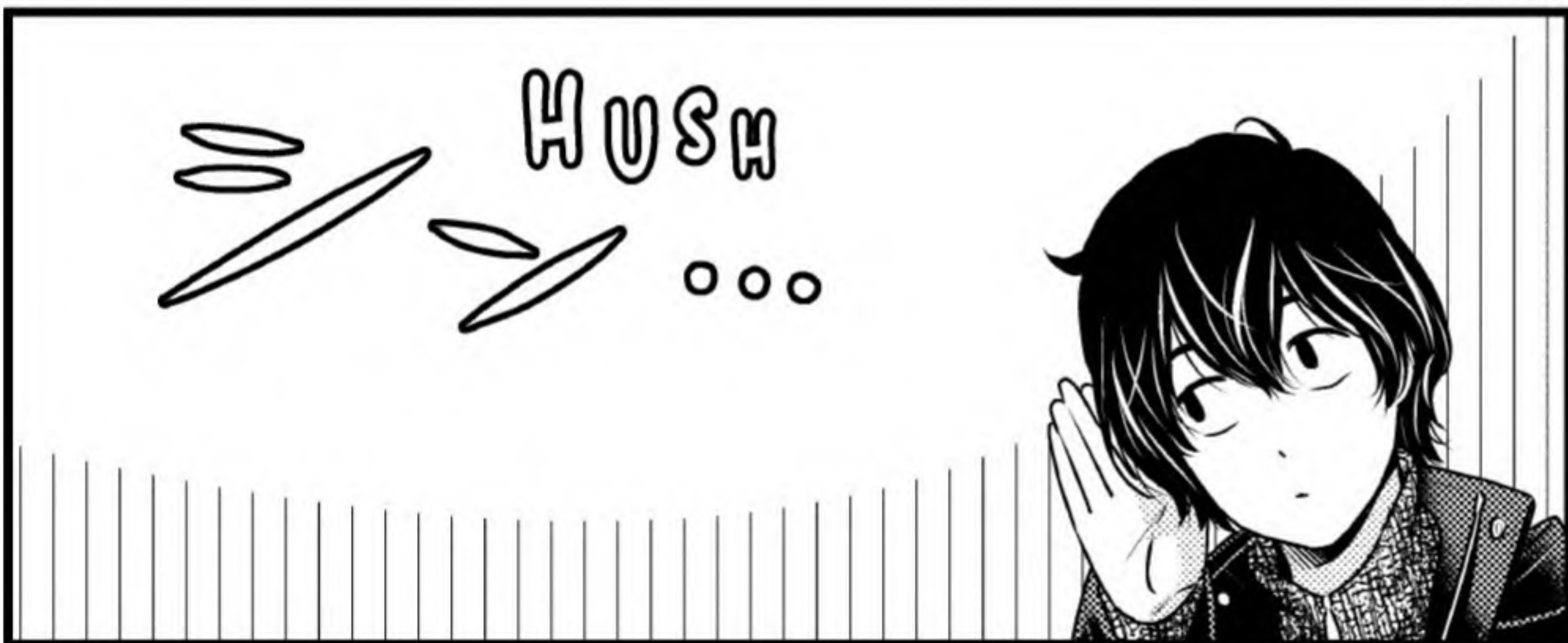
I'D  
BETTER  
BE  
GOING.





## CHAPTER 210: A CERTAIN WRITER'S PAST

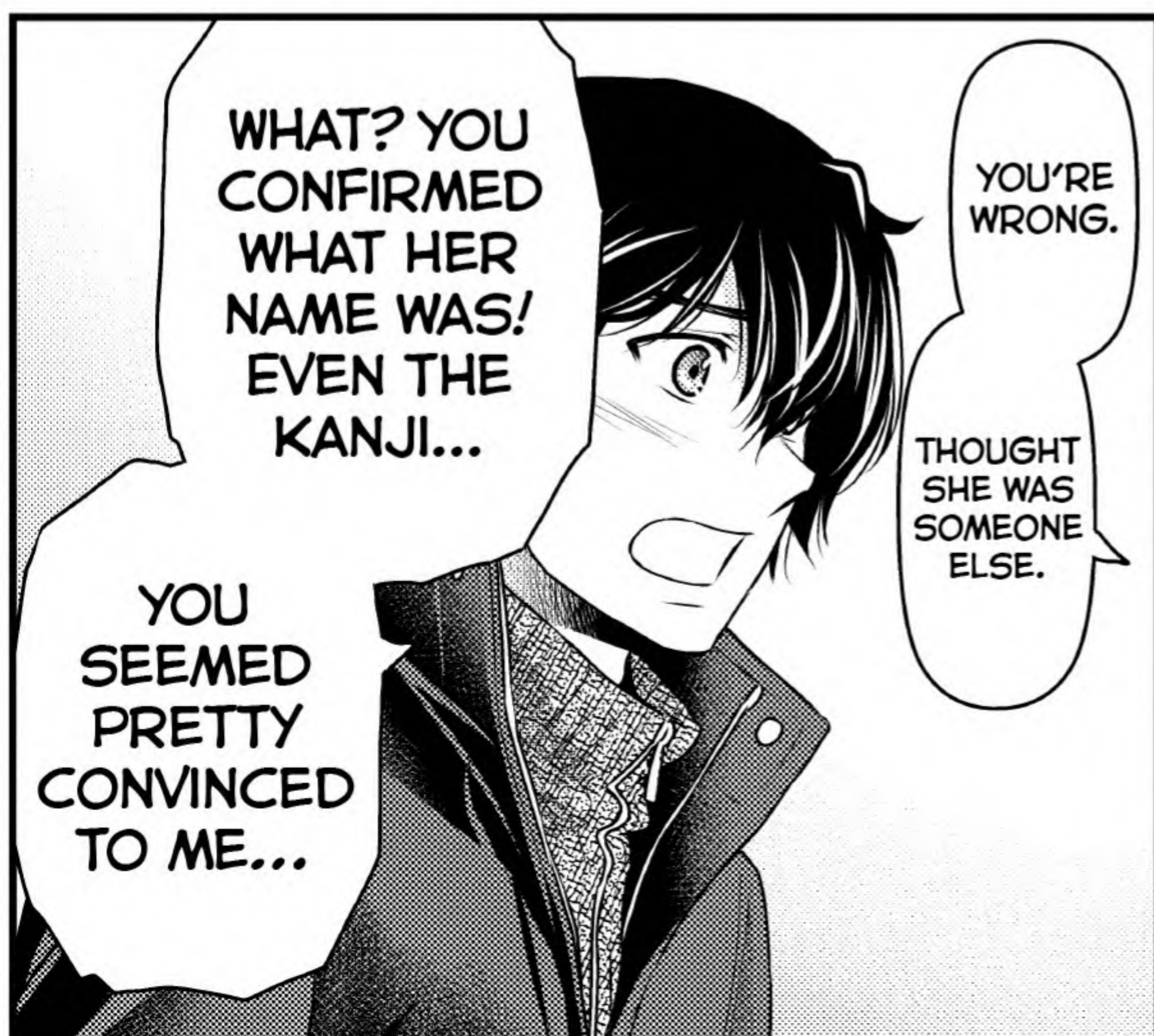
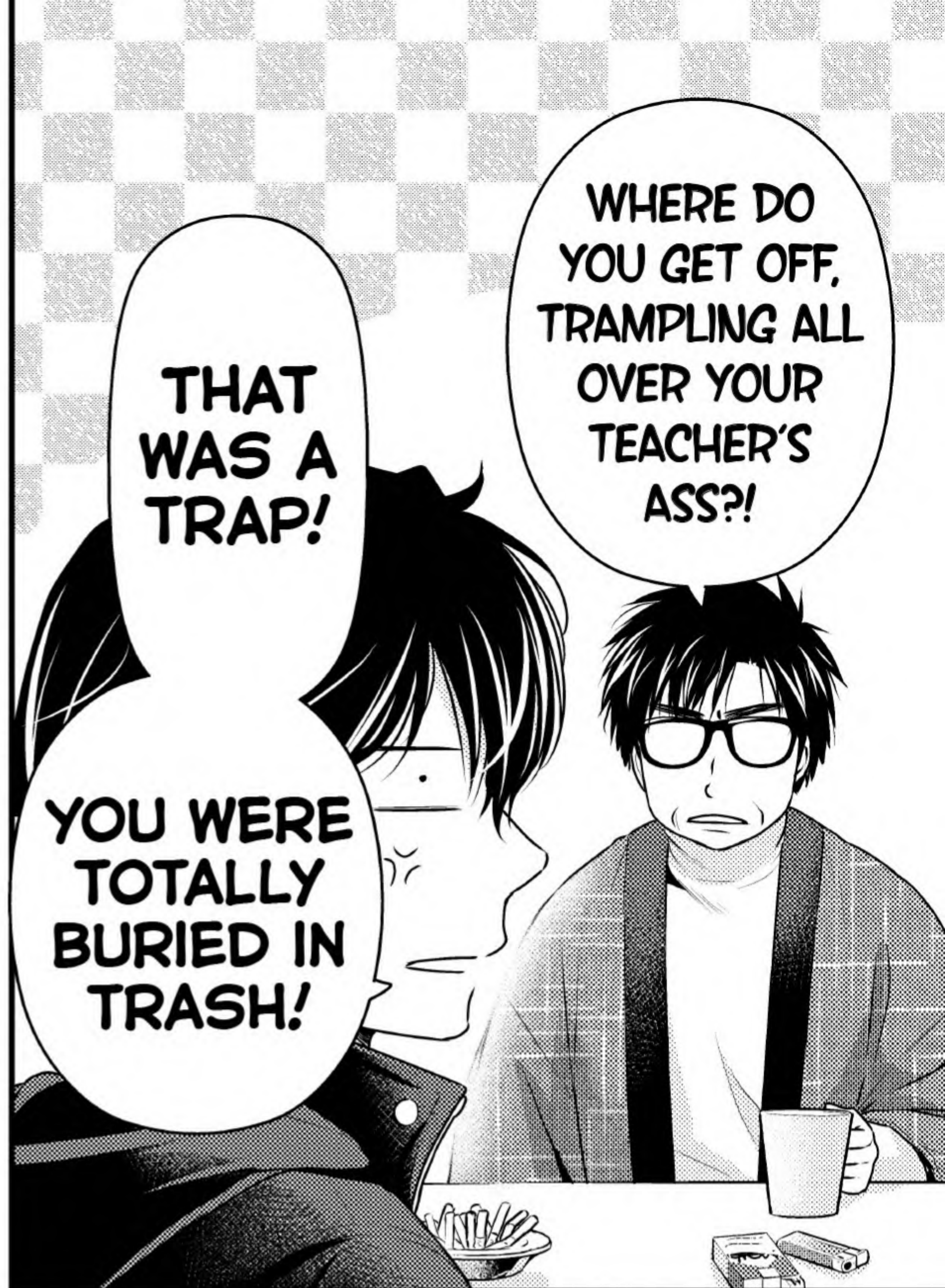
















...WAS LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE.

LIKE YOU HAD SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO SAY.

AND NOT JUST BECAUSE I KNOW BOTH OF YOU.

THE WAY YOU LOOKED AT THAT MOMENT ...

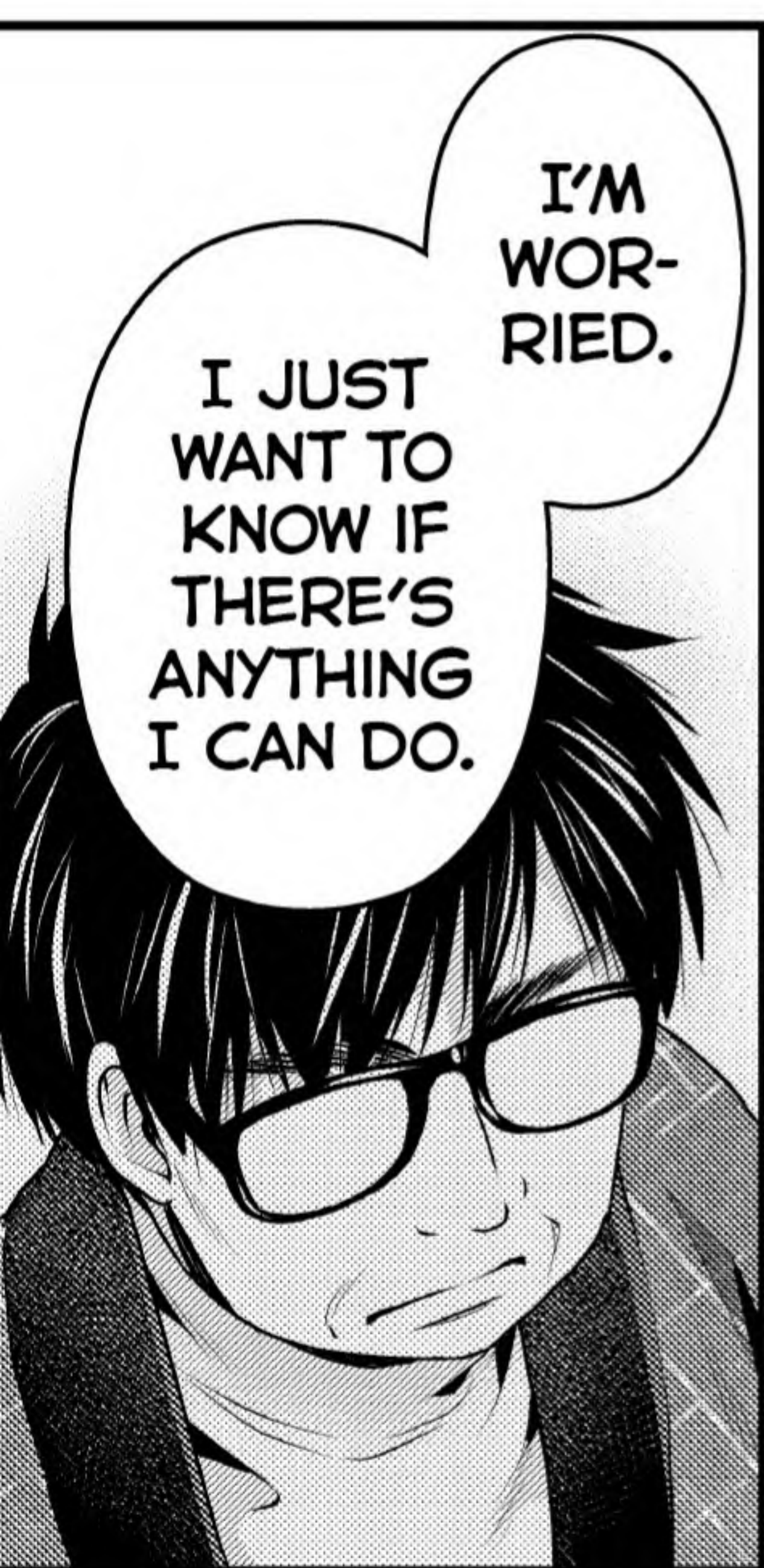


IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

IT'S GOT PLENTY TO DO WITH ME!

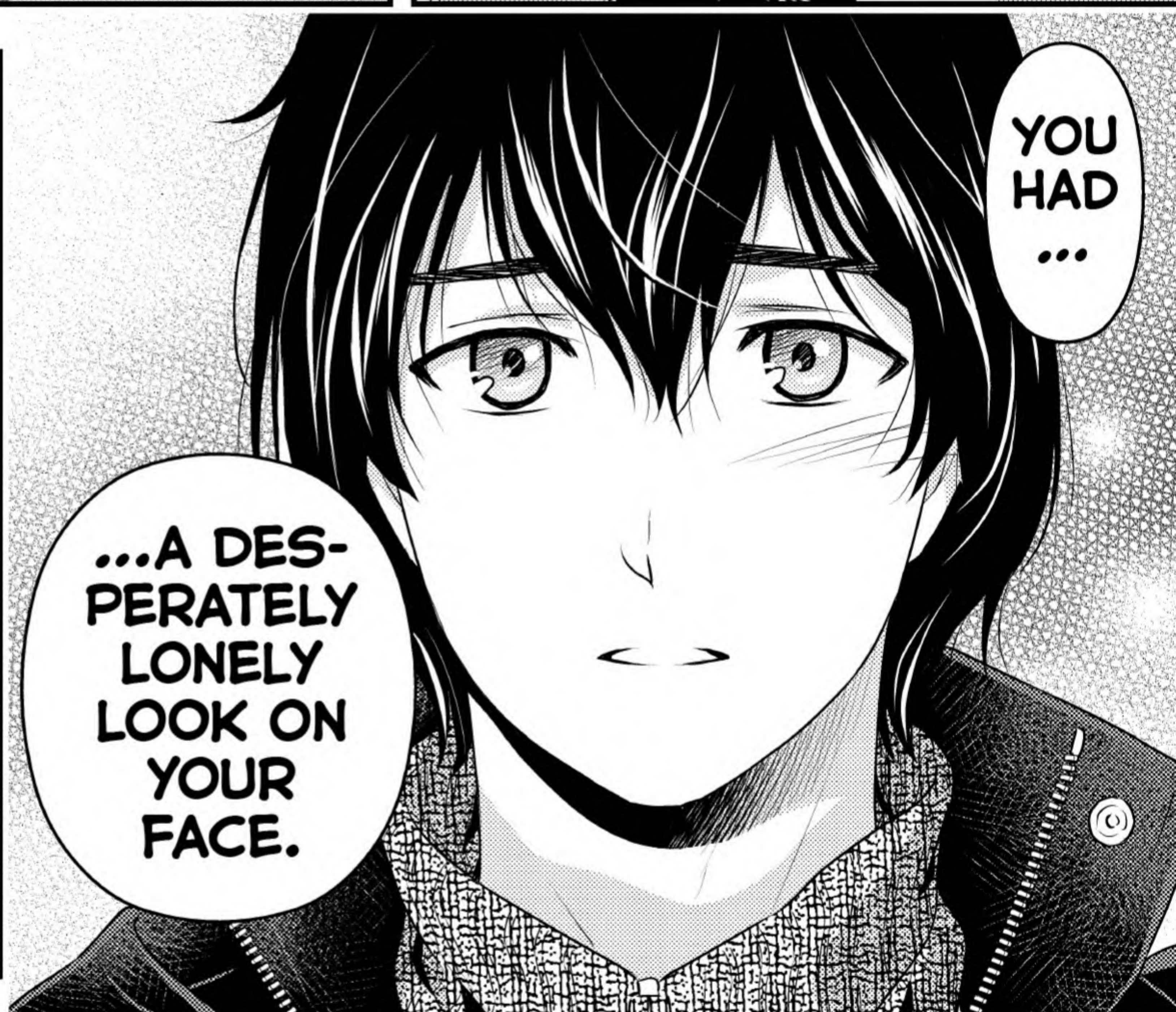
JUST DROP IT! GOD!

WHAT DO YOU CARE?



I JUST WANT TO KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO.

I'M WORRIED.



YOU HAD ...

...A DESPERATELY LONELY LOOK ON YOUR FACE.



BUT WHEN I HEARD HER NAME,

I THOUGHT MY HEART WAS ABOUT TO STOP.

I'VE NEVER MET HER BEFORE.

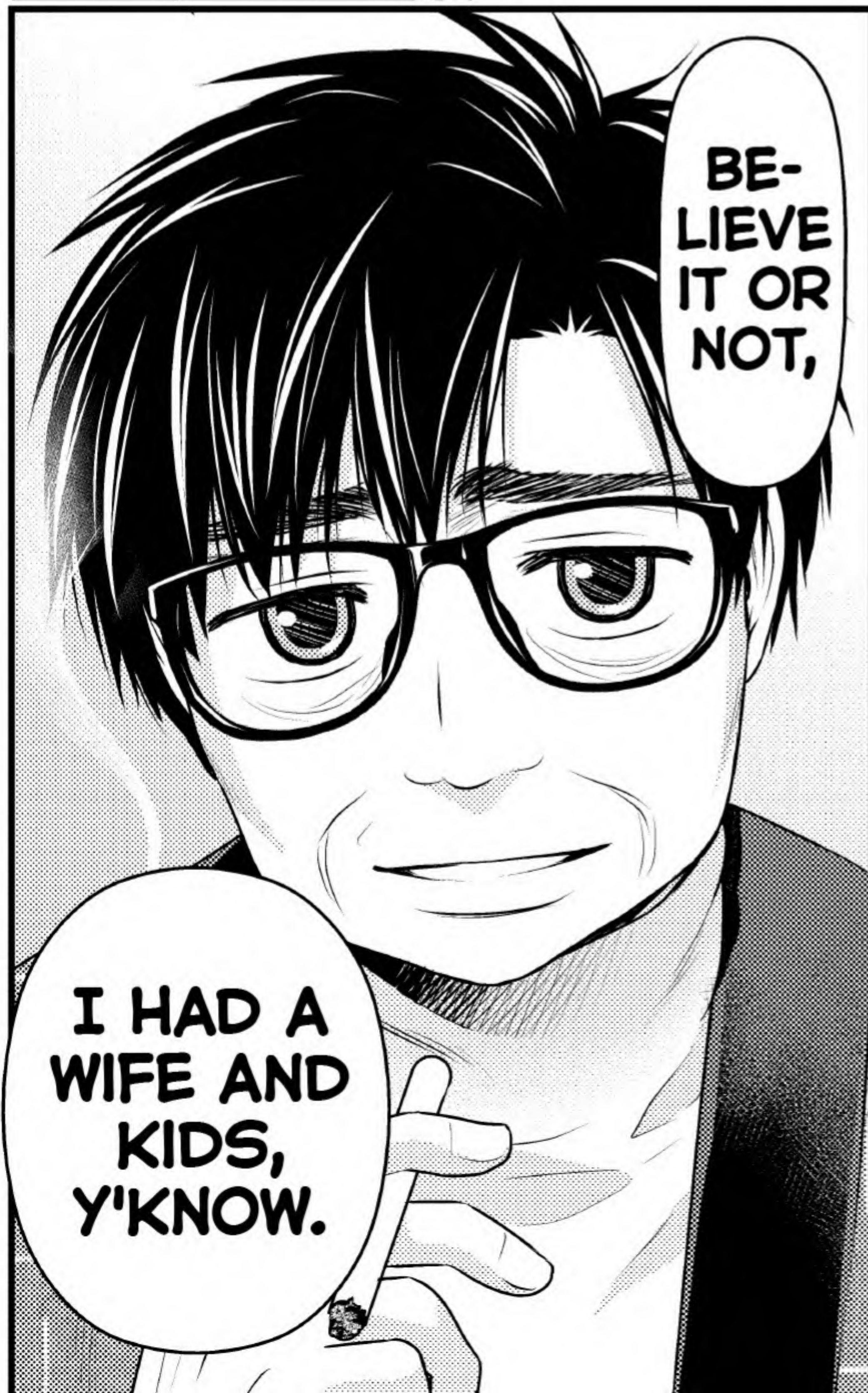
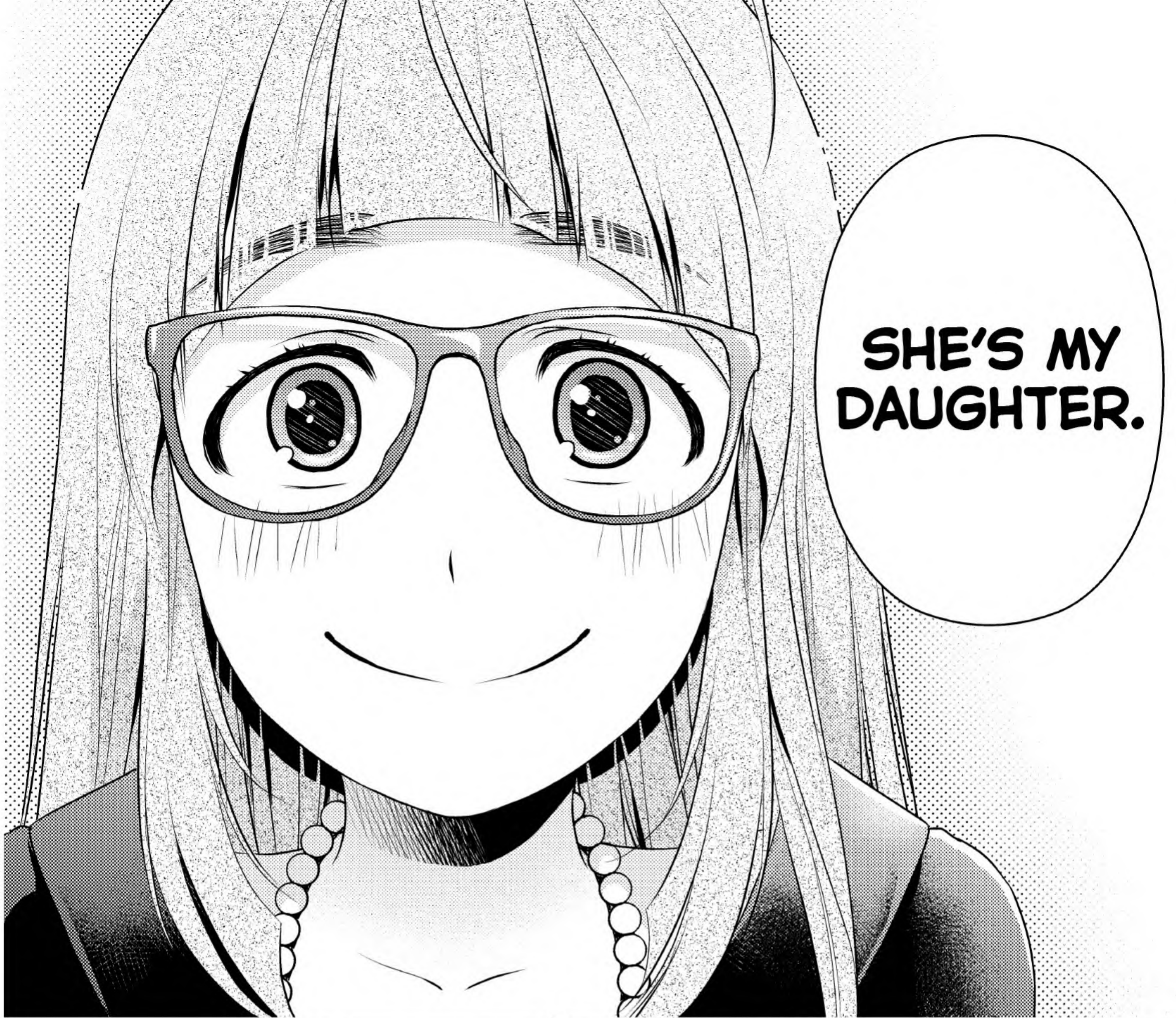


WORRIED,

HUH ?

SO EVEN I STILL HAVE SOMEONE THAT WORRIES ABOUT ME, DO I?













I WANNA  
BUILD THIS  
IN THE  
GARDEN!

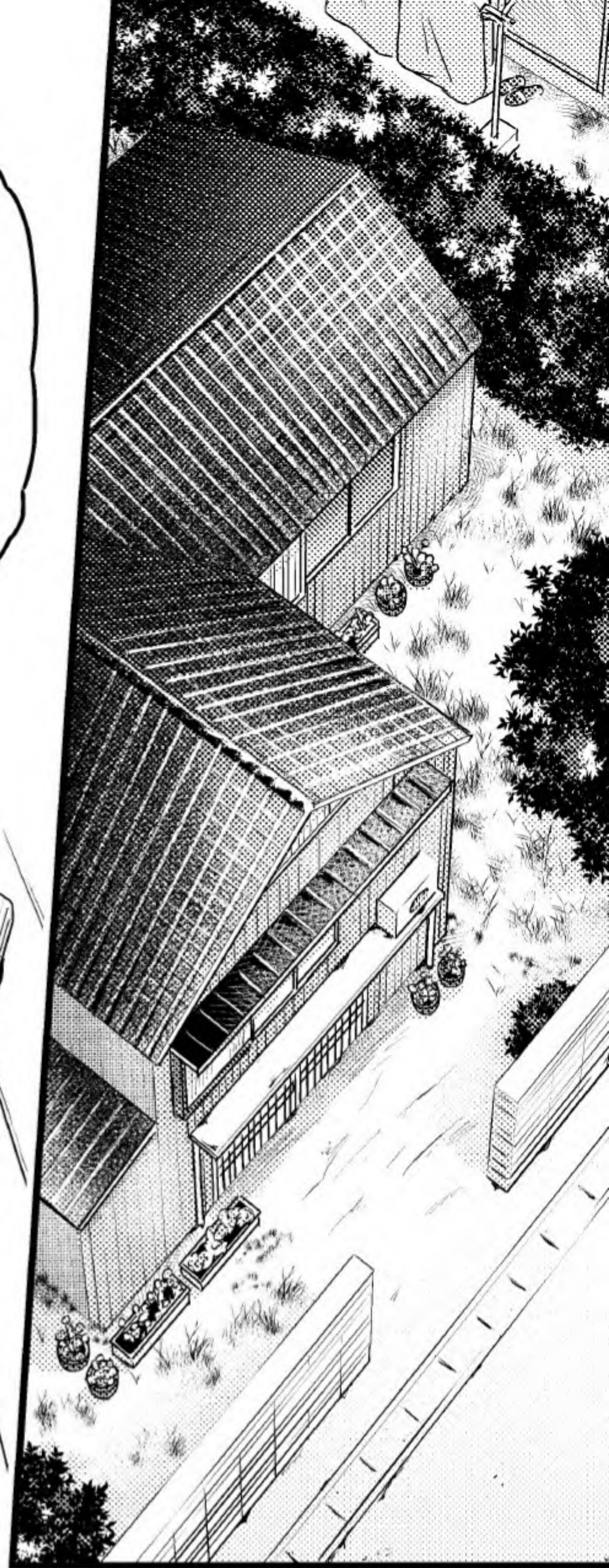
THE  
GAR-  
DEN?

IT'LL  
GET  
DIRTY!



DADDY!

LET'S  
PLAY!



I WAS  
GETTING  
A LITTLE  
DESPER-  
ATE.



AT THAT  
POINT...

...I'D HAD  
ONE HIT, BUT  
THE SALES  
FOR MY LAST  
COUPLE  
BOOKS AND  
MY ANTHOL-  
OGIES WERE  
MIDDLING AT  
BEST.



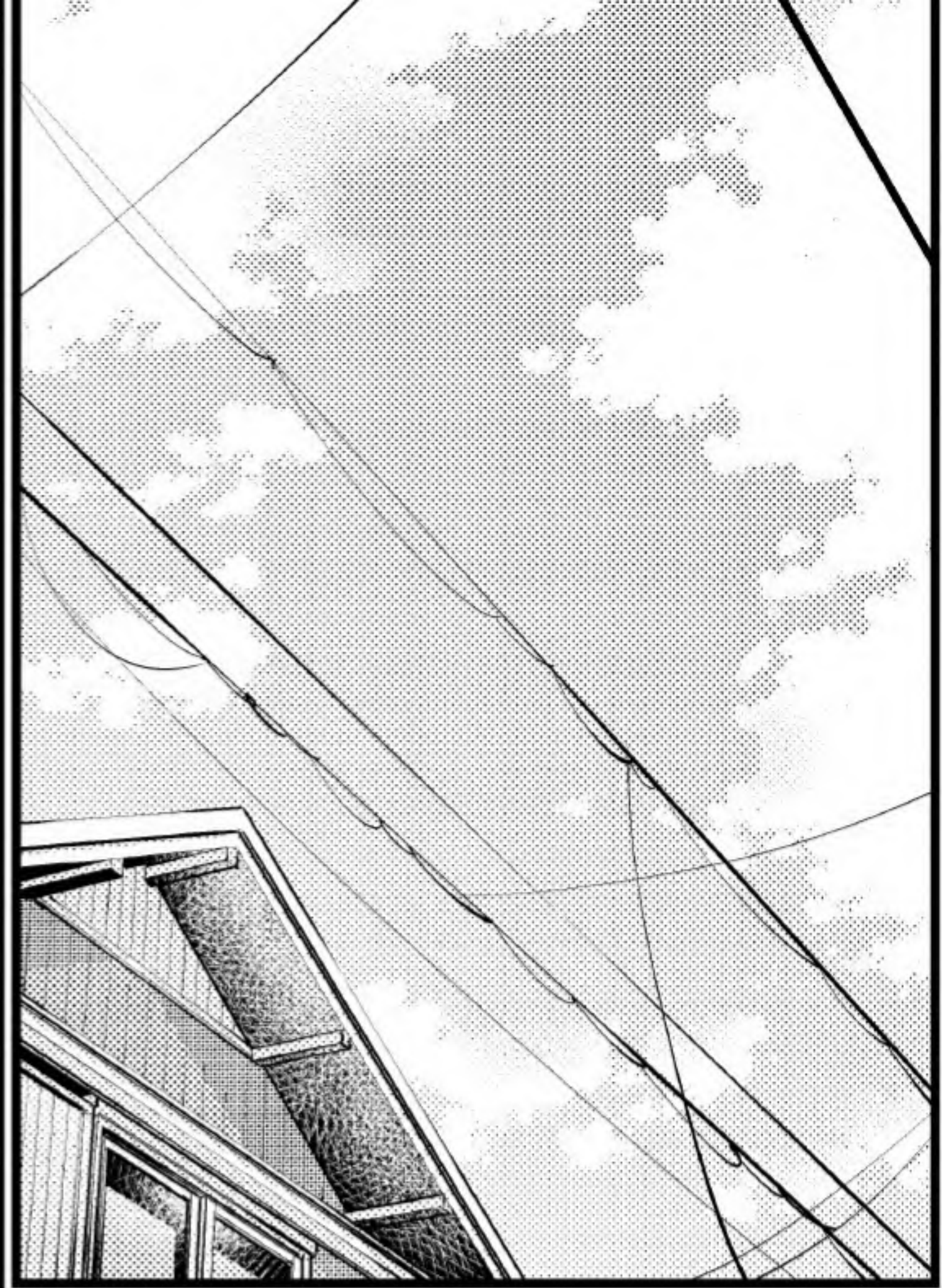
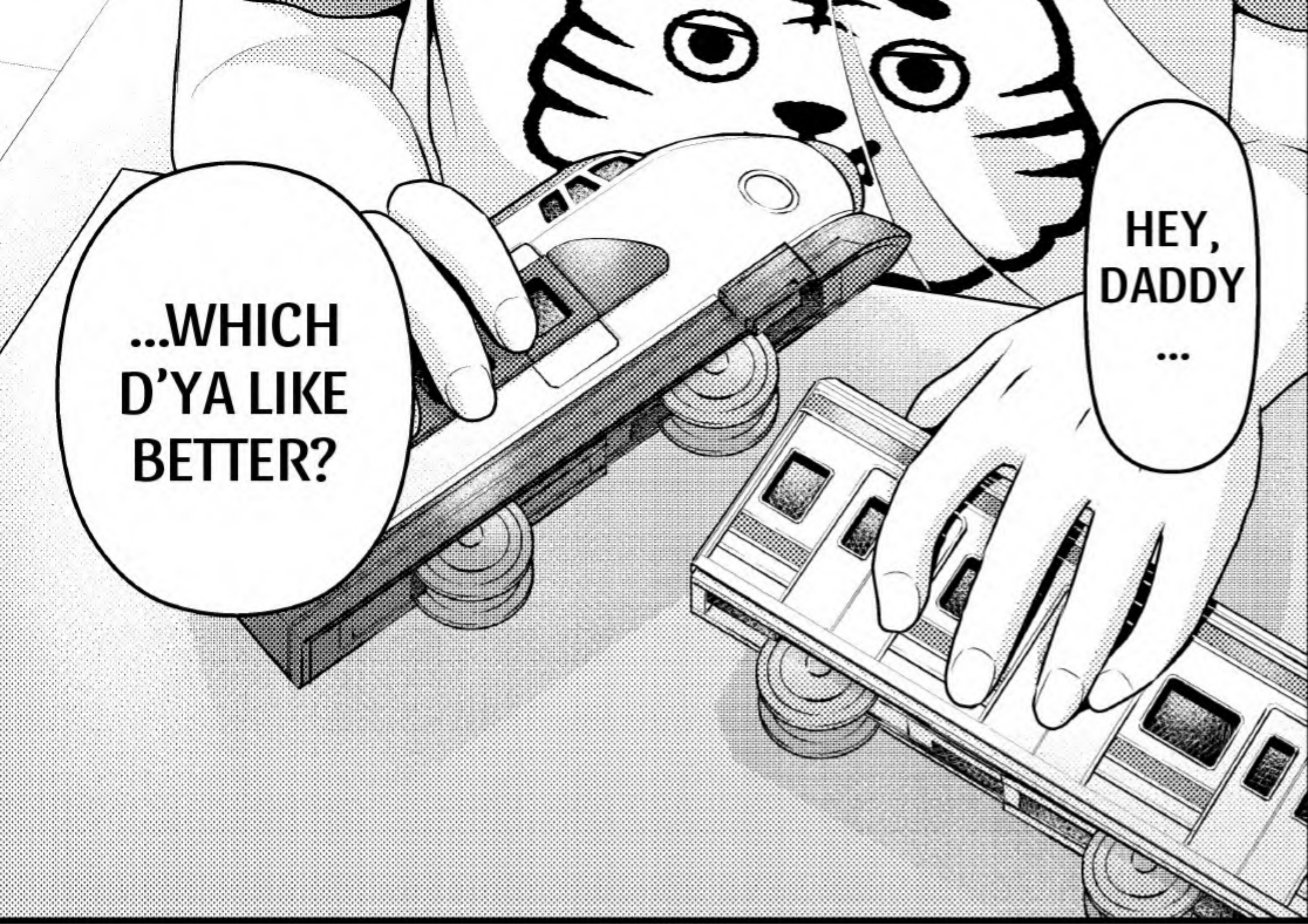
DADDY  
HAS TO  
WORK,  
SOSUKE.

YOU CAN  
PLAY BY  
YOURSELF,  
CAN'T  
YOU?



JUST BUILD  
YOUR  
RAILWAY IN  
THE LIVING  
ROOM.





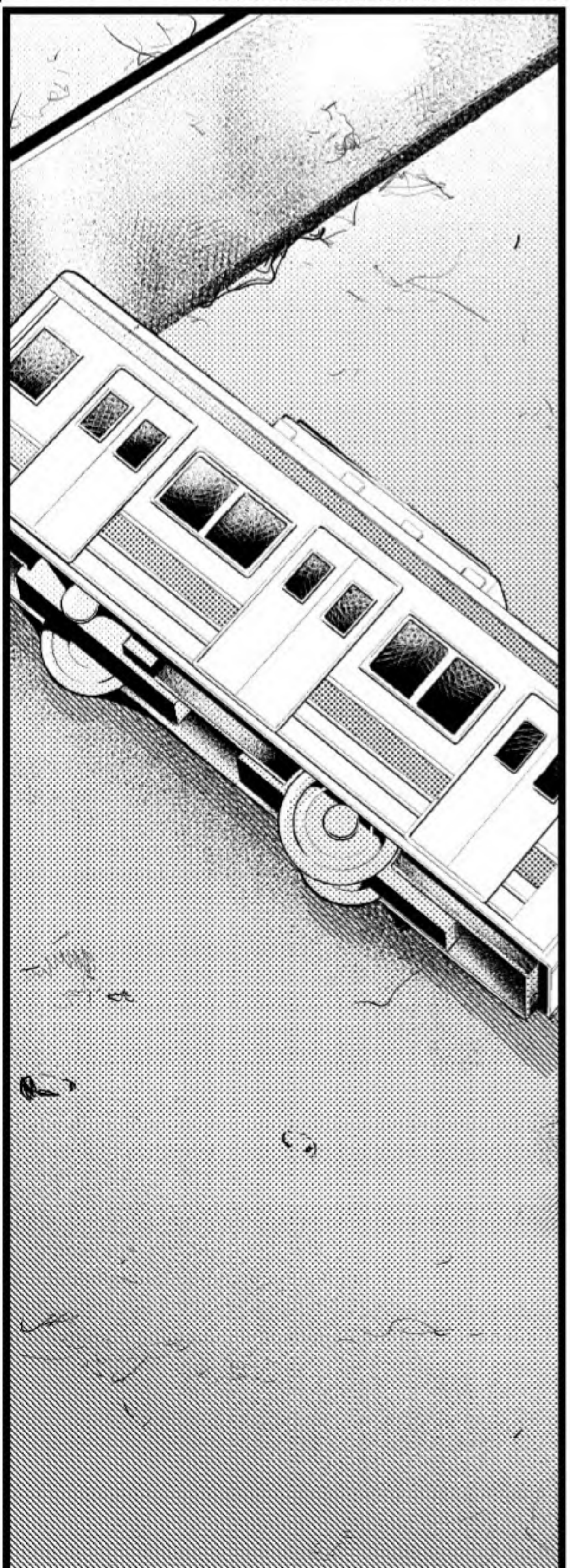
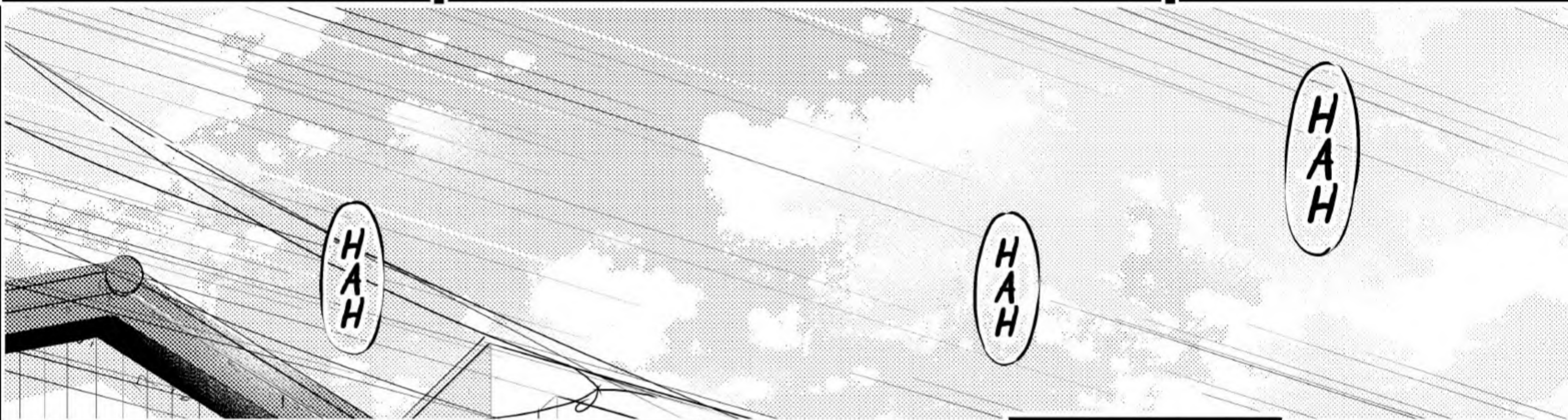








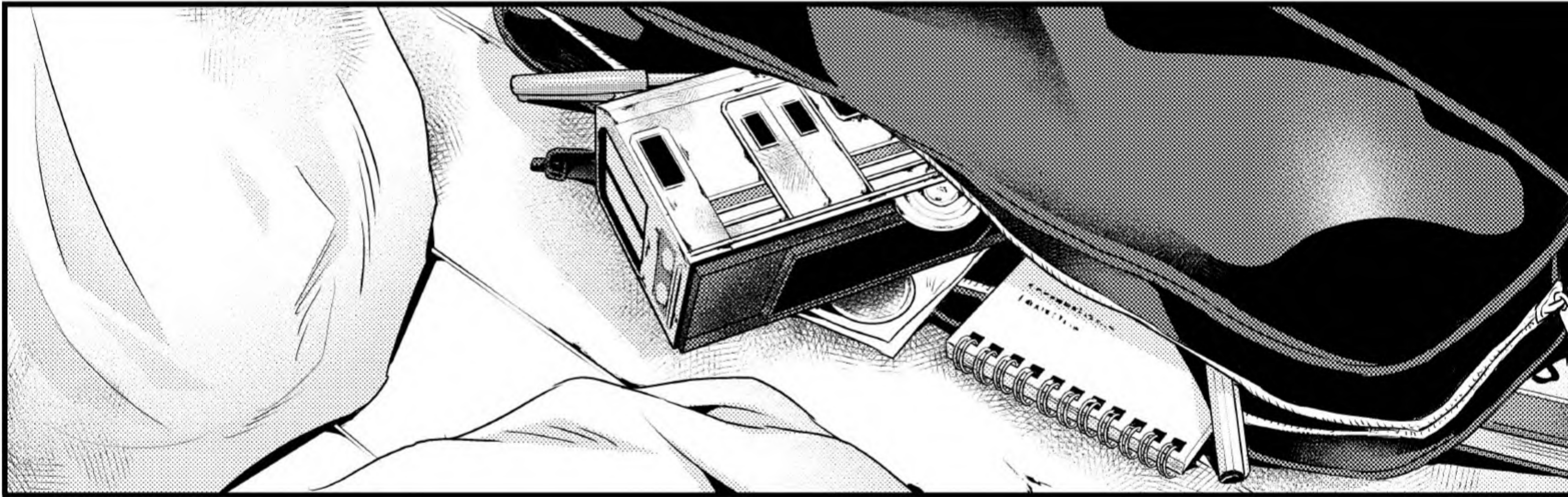
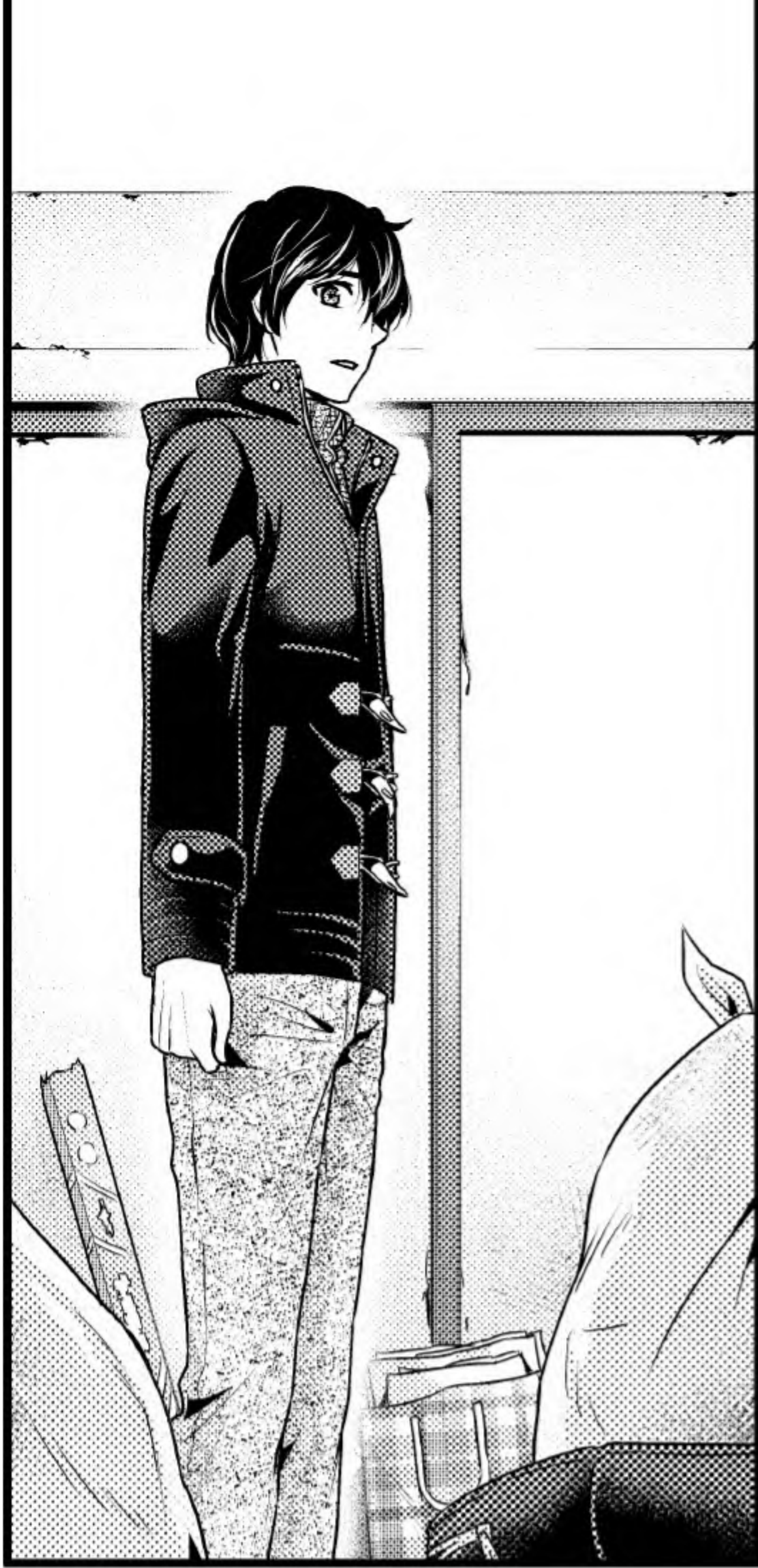




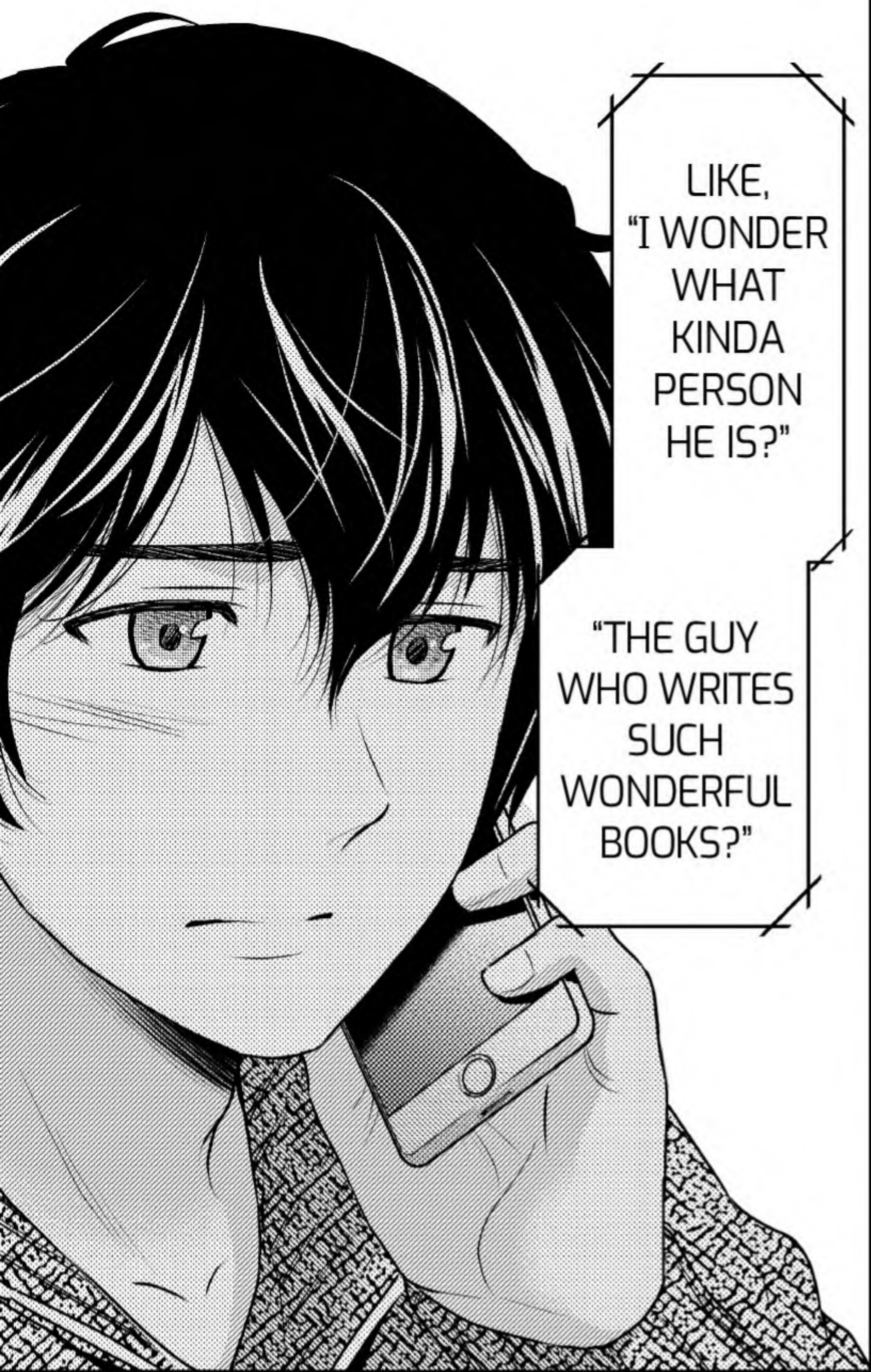






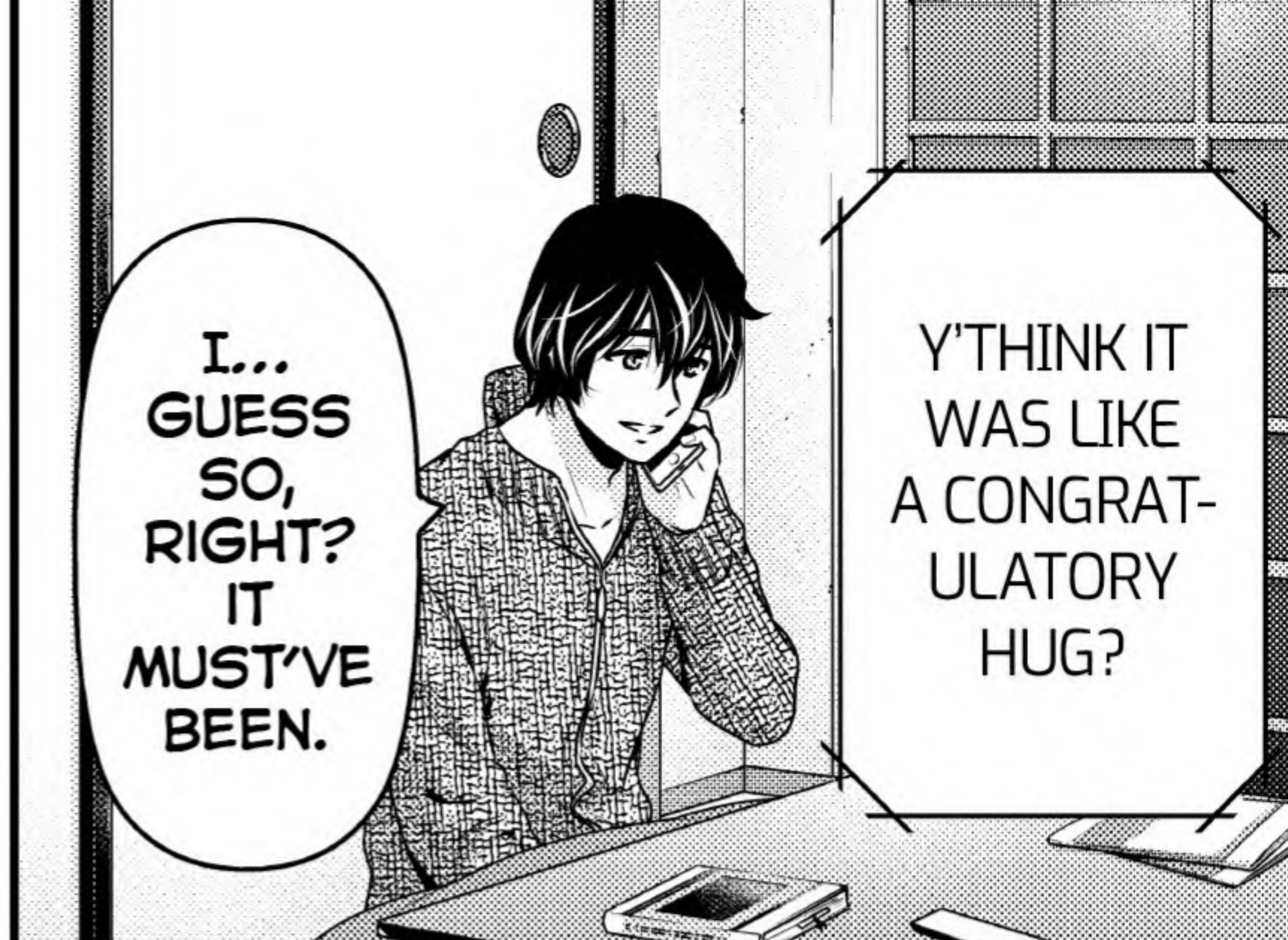






LIKE,  
"I WONDER  
WHAT  
KINDA  
PERSON  
HE IS?"

"THE GUY  
WHO WRITES  
SUCH  
WONDERFUL  
BOOKS?"



I...  
GUESS  
SO,  
RIGHT?  
IT  
MUST'VE  
BEEN.

Y'THINK IT  
WAS LIKE  
A CONGRAT-  
ULATORY  
HUG?



I'VE  
READ ALL  
OF TOGEN-  
SENSEI'S  
BOOKS,  
AFTER  
ALL.

HONESTLY,  
I WISH I  
COULD'VE  
TALKED TO  
HIM MORE,  
THOUGH.

I ALWAYS  
WANTED TO  
MEET HIM.



I'VE  
GOT CHIPS  
& STUFF  
AT HOME!

WANNA GO  
BUY SOME  
SNACKS?



...SO HE  
MUST BE  
HOME,  
RIGHT?

IT'S NOT  
LOCKED  
...



I GUESS  
I REALLY  
SHOULD  
FILL HER  
IN...

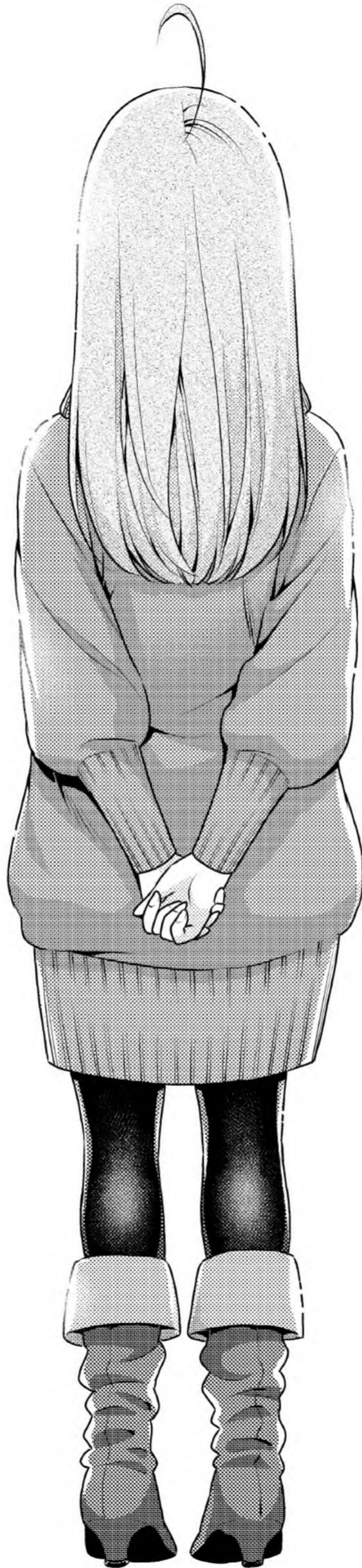
ANYBODY  
HOOOME  
?









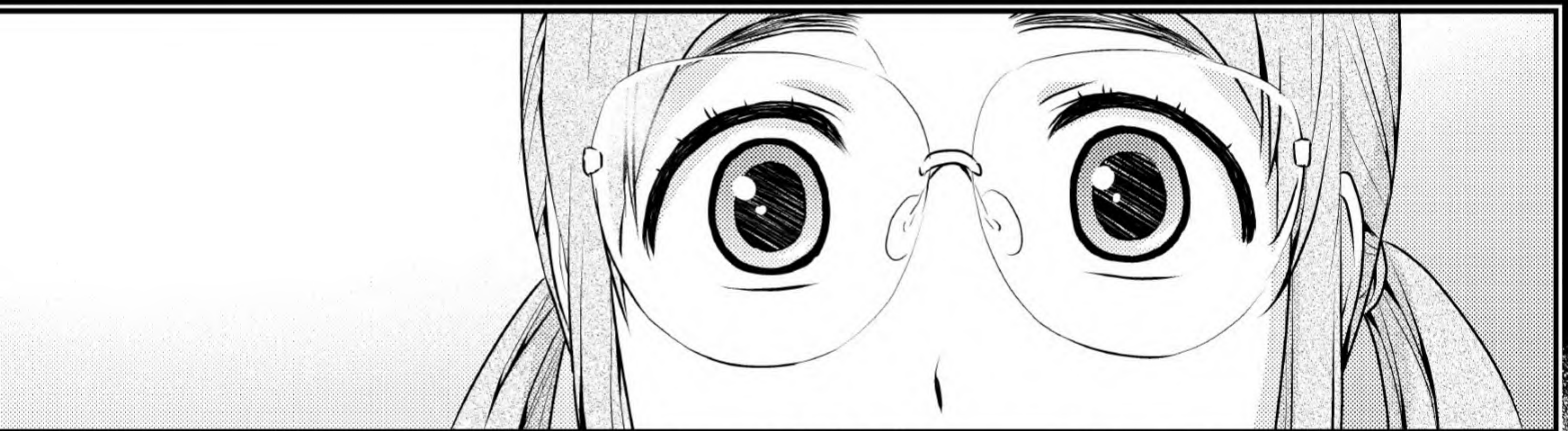


## CHAPTER 211: AS A FATHER, AS A DAUGHTER













はあ  
HEE EEW

OH...  
THANK  
GOD!

THE  
PATIENT  
IS CON-  
SCIOUS.



IN AN  
AMBU-  
LANCE.

I FOUND  
YOU COL-  
LAPSED  
AT HOME,  
SENSEI.

...  
WHERE  
THE  
HELL  
AM I?



SEN-  
SEI...



UH-UH!  
YOU WERE  
OUT COLD  
UNTIL A  
SECOND  
AGO,  
Y'KNOW!

THERE'S  
NO WAY  
YOU'RE  
FINE!



I WAS  
JUST  
A LI'L  
TIRED,  
THAT'S  
ALL.

DON'T  
BE A  
DRAMA  
QUEEN.

TELL 'EM  
TO LET  
ME OUT.  
I'M FINE.

WHA  
?!



YOU WERE  
PALE AS A  
GHOST. I  
WASN'T SURE  
IF YOU WERE  
GONNA  
MAKE IT...

...

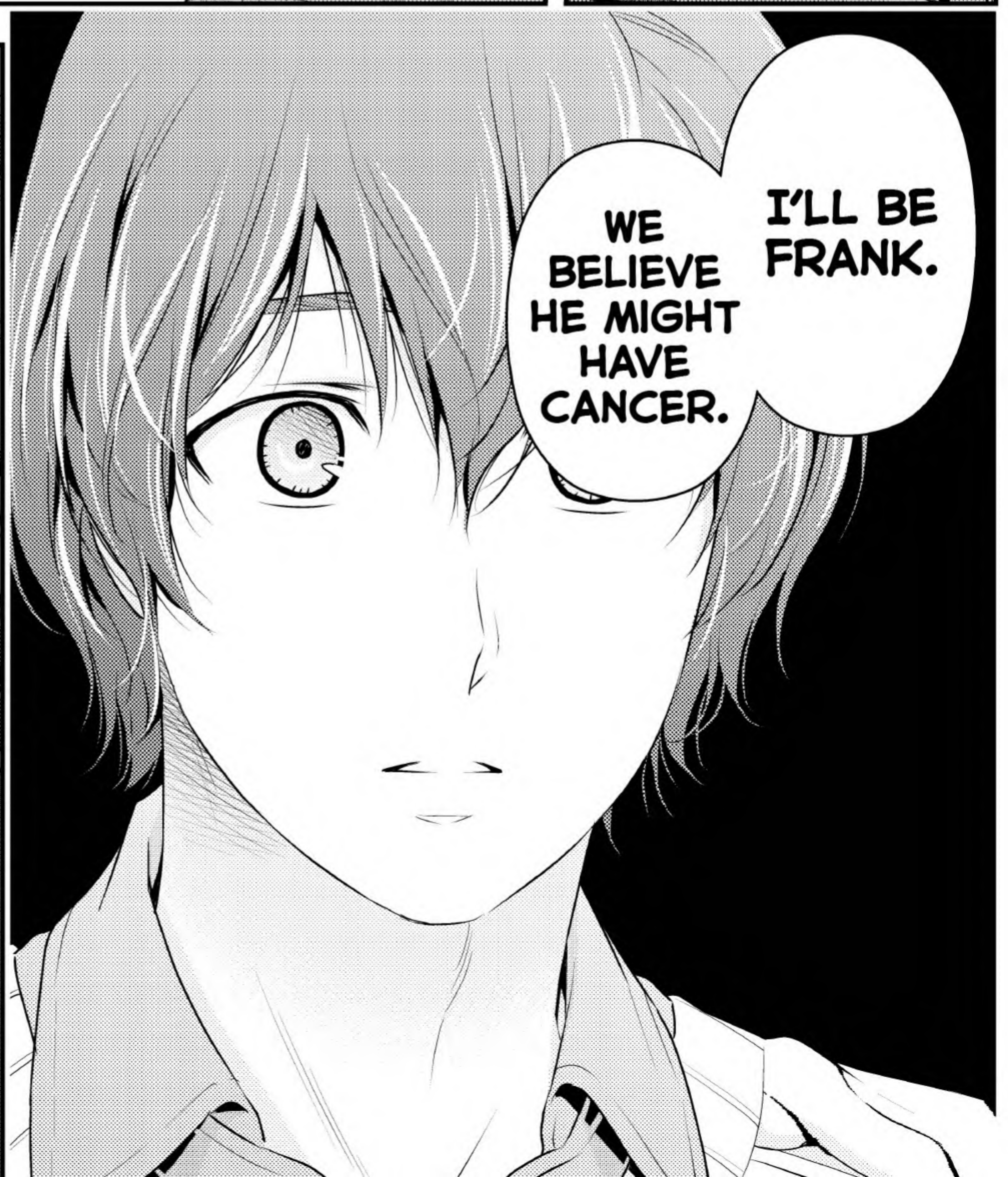
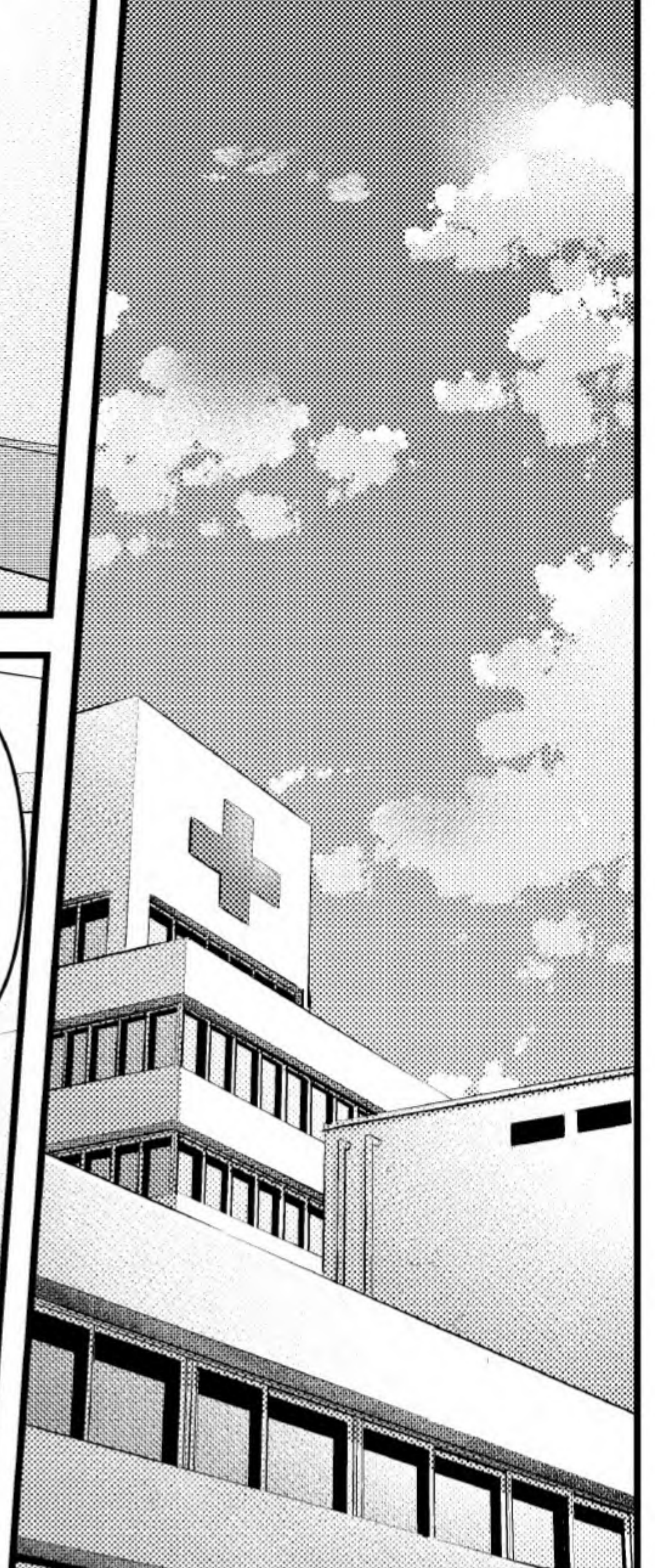


PLEASE  
GET  
YOURSELF  
CHECKED  
OUT!





SIGN: EXAM ROOM 3







HE MIGHT HAVE COLLAPSED DUE TO A COMBINATION OF FATIGUE AND CHEST PAIN.

AT ANY RATE, IT'S A GOOD THING WE CAUGHT IT NOW.

WE WON'T KNOW ANYTHING FOR SURE UNTIL WE GET HIS LAB RESULTS BACK, BUT IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY.

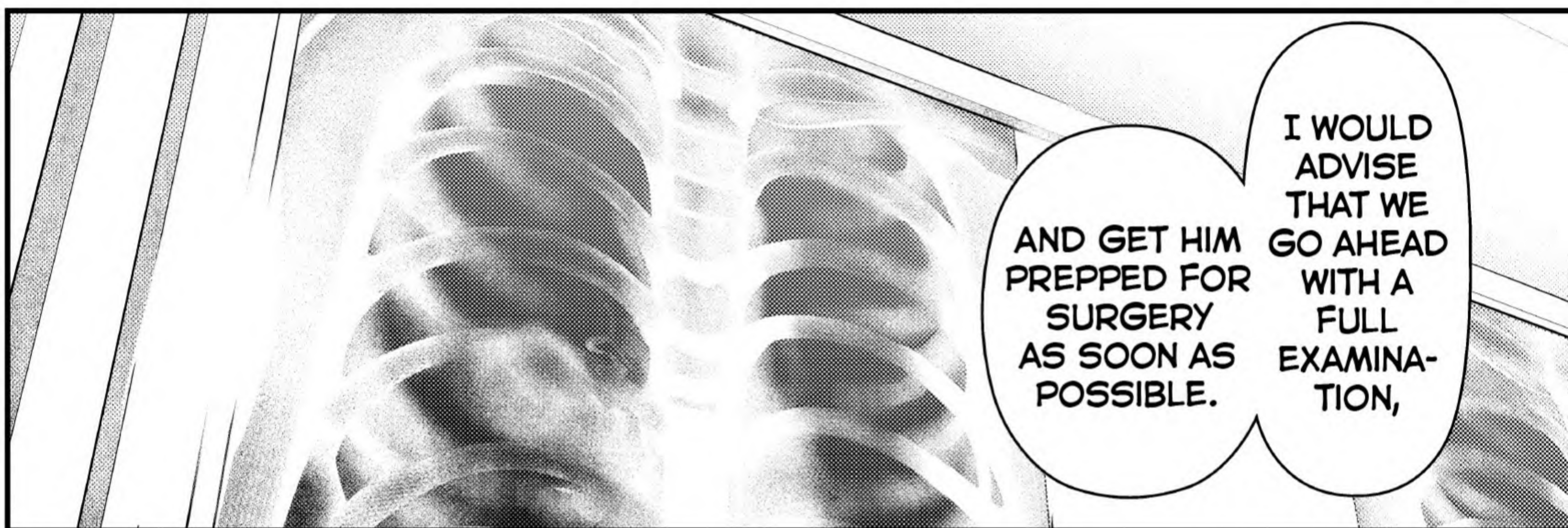


BUT HE DIDN'T SEEM SICK OR ANYTHING.

NO, NOT REALLY.

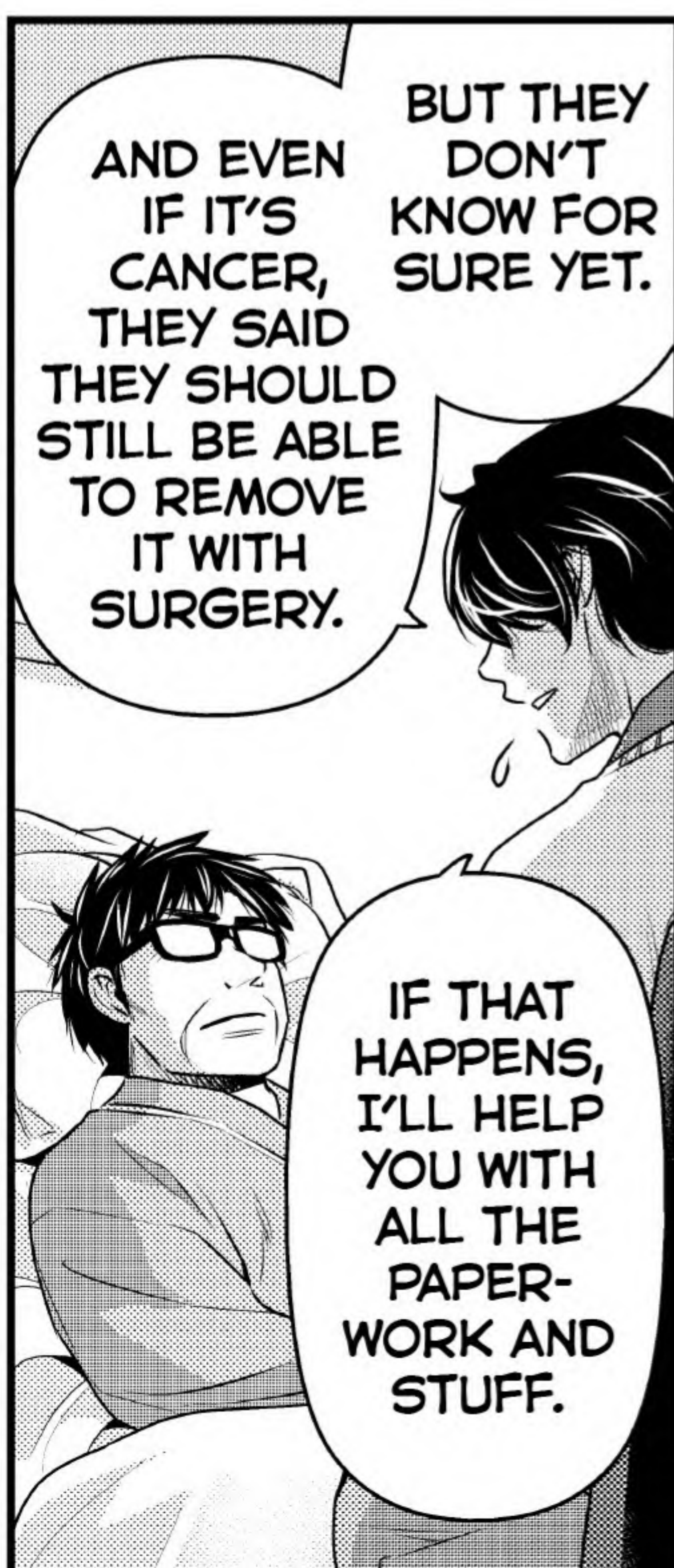
I SEE. WELL, SYMPTOMS CAN OFTEN-TIMES BE SUBTLE.

I MEAN, HE'D SOMETIMES COUGH WHEN HE SMOKED,



AND GET HIM PREPPED FOR SURGERY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

I WOULD ADVISE THAT WE GO AHEAD WITH A FULL EXAMINATION,



AND EVEN IF IT'S CANCER, THEY SAID THEY SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO REMOVE IT WITH SURGERY.

BUT THEY DON'T KNOW FOR SURE YET.

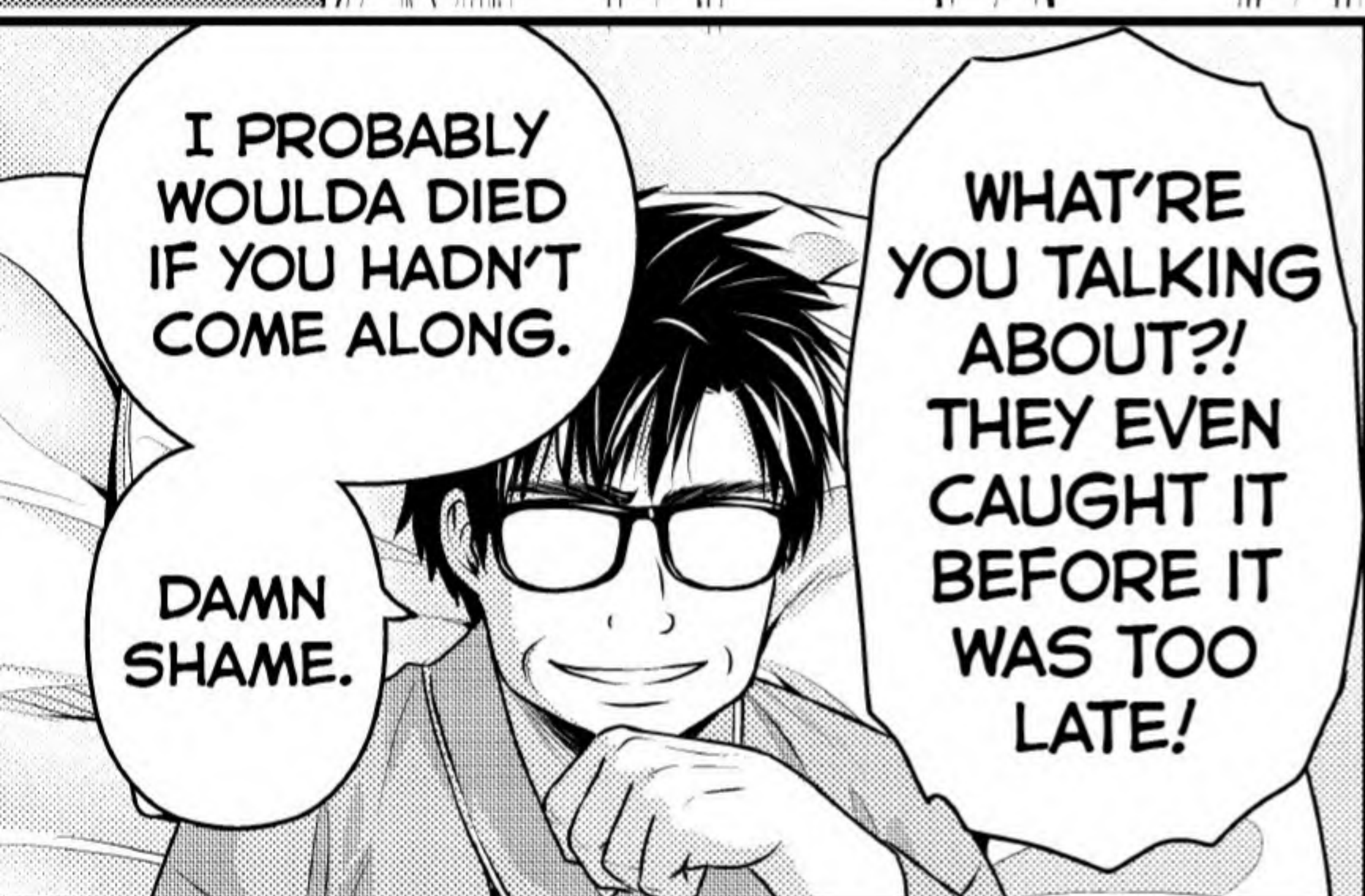
IF THAT HAPPENS, I'LL HELP YOU WITH ALL THE PAPER-WORK AND STUFF.



THEY TOLD YOU TOO, EH?

I SEE.





I PROBABLY  
WOULDA DIED  
IF YOU HADN'T  
COME ALONG.

DAMN  
SHAME.

WHAT'RE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT?!  
THEY EVEN  
CAUGHT IT  
BEFORE IT  
WAS TOO  
LATE!



THIS  
IS MY  
DESTINY.

HUH  
?!



...

DOESN'T  
MATTER.



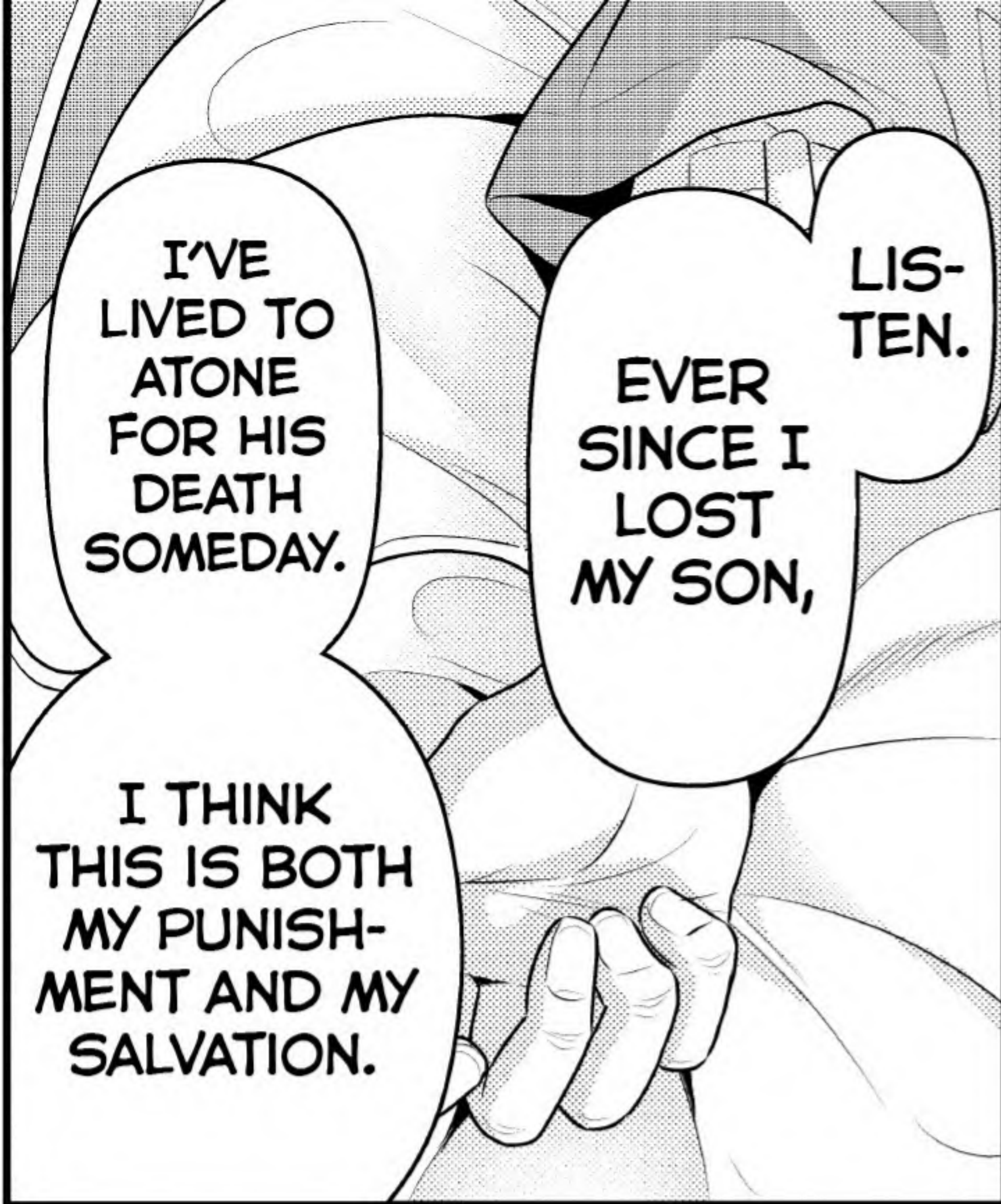
...YOU  
FINALLY  
MET YOUR  
DAUGH-  
TER?

EVEN  
THOUGH  
...



I'M  
GOIN'  
TO HELL  
EITHER  
WAY.



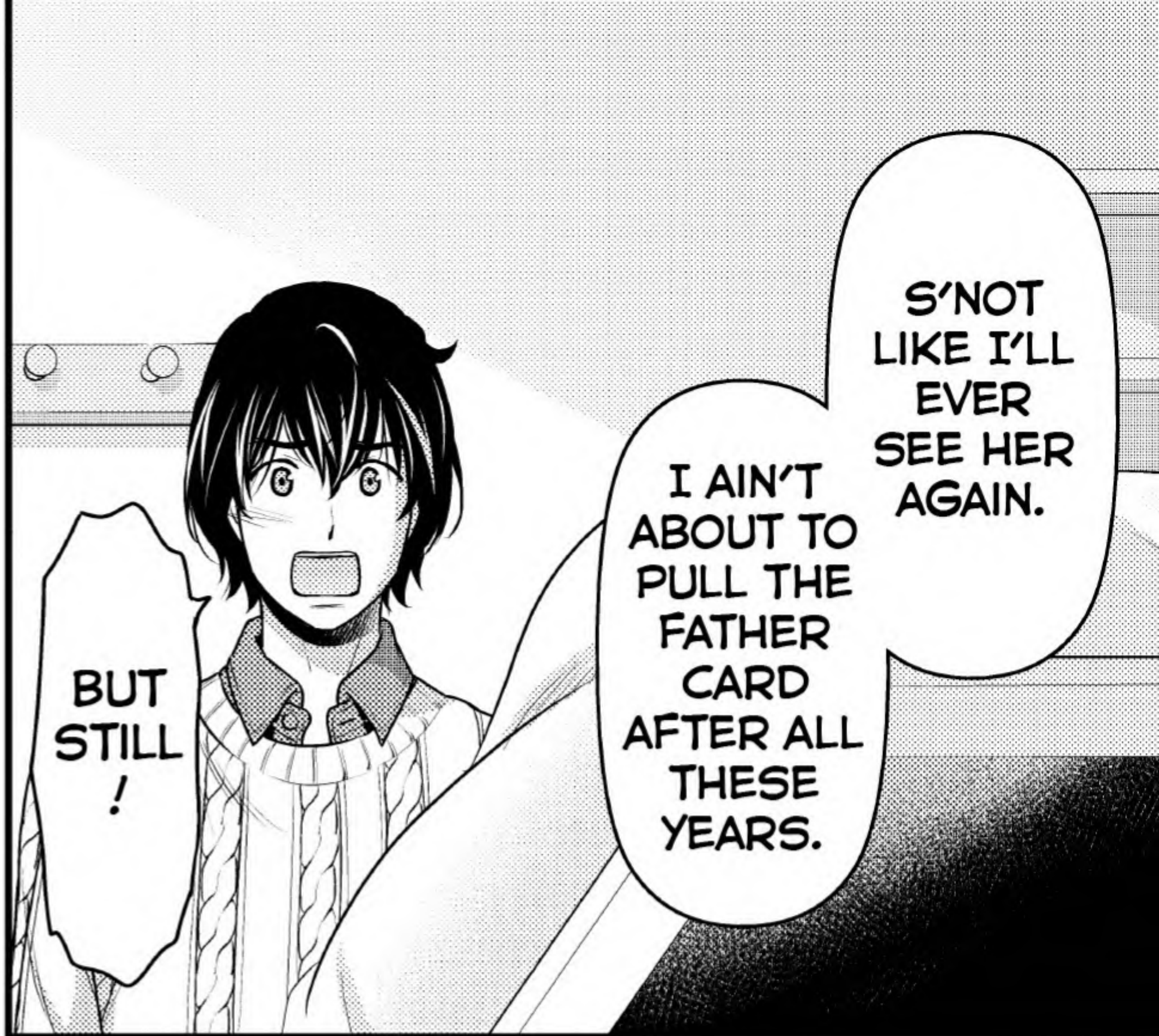


I'VE  
LIVED TO  
ATONE  
FOR HIS  
DEATH  
SOMEDAY.

LIS-  
TEN.

EVER  
SINCE I  
LOST  
MY SON,

I THINK  
THIS IS BOTH  
MY PUNISH-  
MENT AND MY  
SALVATION.



BUT  
STILL  
!

I AIN'T  
ABOUT TO  
PULL THE  
FATHER  
CARD  
AFTER ALL  
THESE  
YEARS.

S'NOT  
LIKE I'LL  
EVER  
SEE HER  
AGAIN.



THEN  
I'VE  
JUST  
GOTTA  
ACCEPT  
IT.

IF  
THAT'S  
HOW  
IT IS,



Family Tree  
家族相関図

Kazumi  
Hanamura  
華村 一実

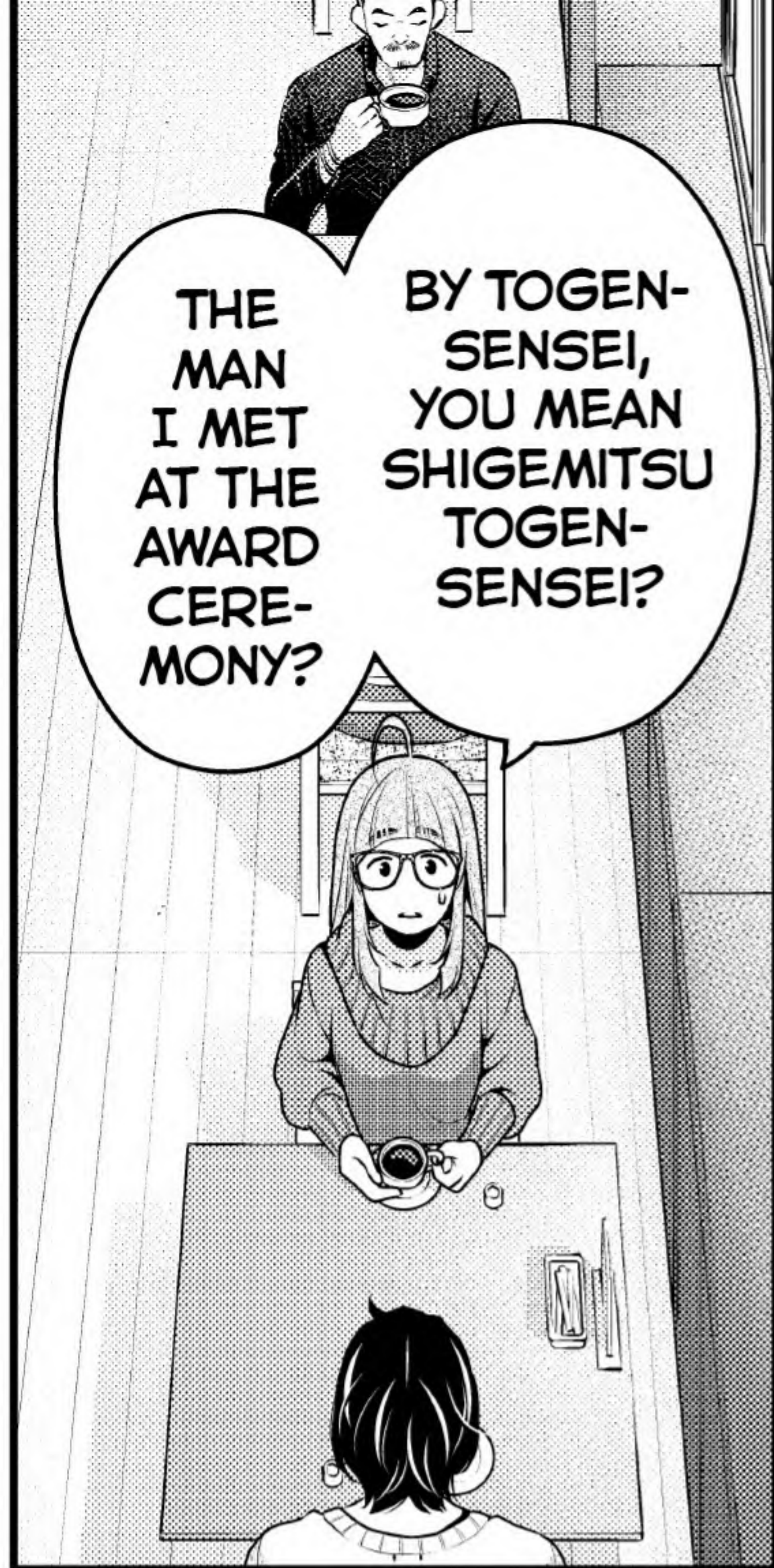
OH,  
THERE  
IT IS!









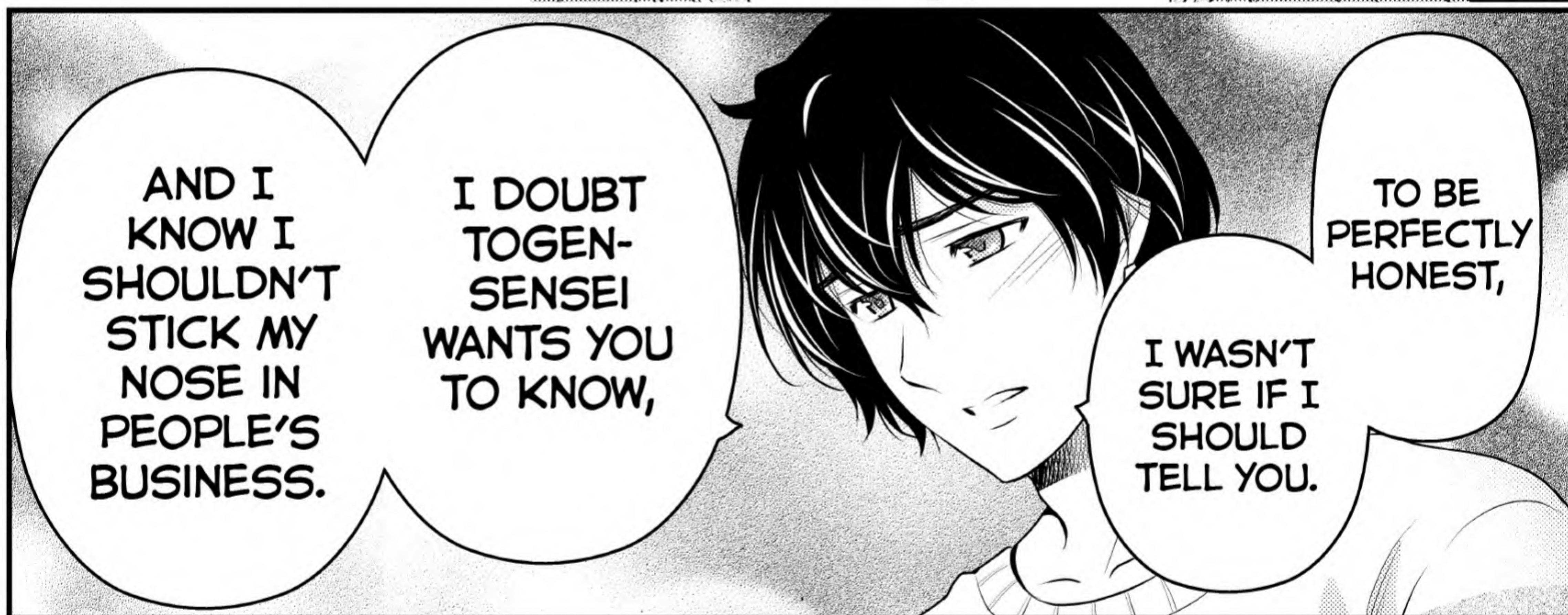


THE  
MAN  
I MET  
AT THE  
AWARD  
CERE-  
MONY?

BY TOGEN-  
SENSEI,  
YOU MEAN  
SHIGEMITSU  
TOGEN-  
SENSEI?



MY  
FATHER  
?



AND I  
KNOW I  
SHOULDN'T  
STICK MY  
NOSE IN  
PEOPLE'S  
BUSINESS.

I DOUBT  
TOGEN-  
SENSEI  
WANTS YOU  
TO KNOW,

I WASN'T  
SURE IF I  
SHOULD  
TELL YOU.

TO BE  
PERFECTLY  
HONEST,



THIS  
TIME,  
AS HIS  
DAUGH-  
TER.

WOULD  
YOU BE  
WILLING TO  
MEET WITH  
TOGEN-  
SENSEI  
AGAIN,  
HANA-  
SEMPAI?



BUT  
...

...I JUST  
HAD TO  
TELL YOU.





MY  
BRAIN'S  
...

...HAVING  
A HARD  
TIME  
KEEPING  
UP.

SORRY,  
IT'S  
JUST...

THIS IS  
ALL SO  
SUDDEN.



IF YOU  
DO, THEN  
I'M SURE  
HE'LL...



I GUESS  
I'M JUST...  
A LITTLE  
CONFUSED.

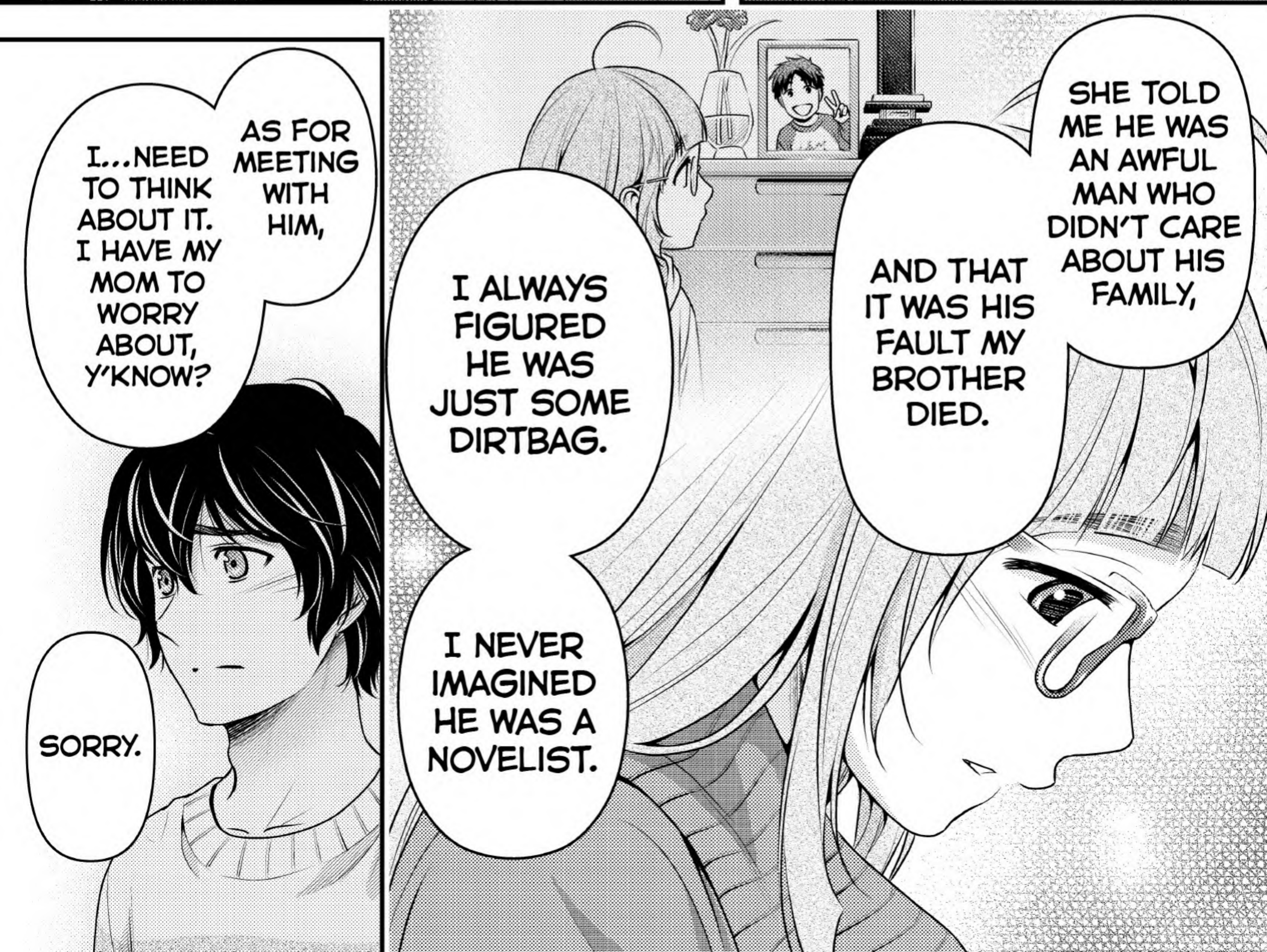
HE WAS  
JUST SO  
DIFFERENT  
FROM HOW  
MY MOM  
TALKED  
ABOUT  
HIM.



PLUS,

YEAH,  
I BET.

OH  
...



I...NEED  
TO THINK  
ABOUT IT.  
I HAVE MY  
MOM TO  
WORRY  
ABOUT,  
Y'KNOW?

AS FOR  
MEETING  
WITH  
HIM,

SORRY.

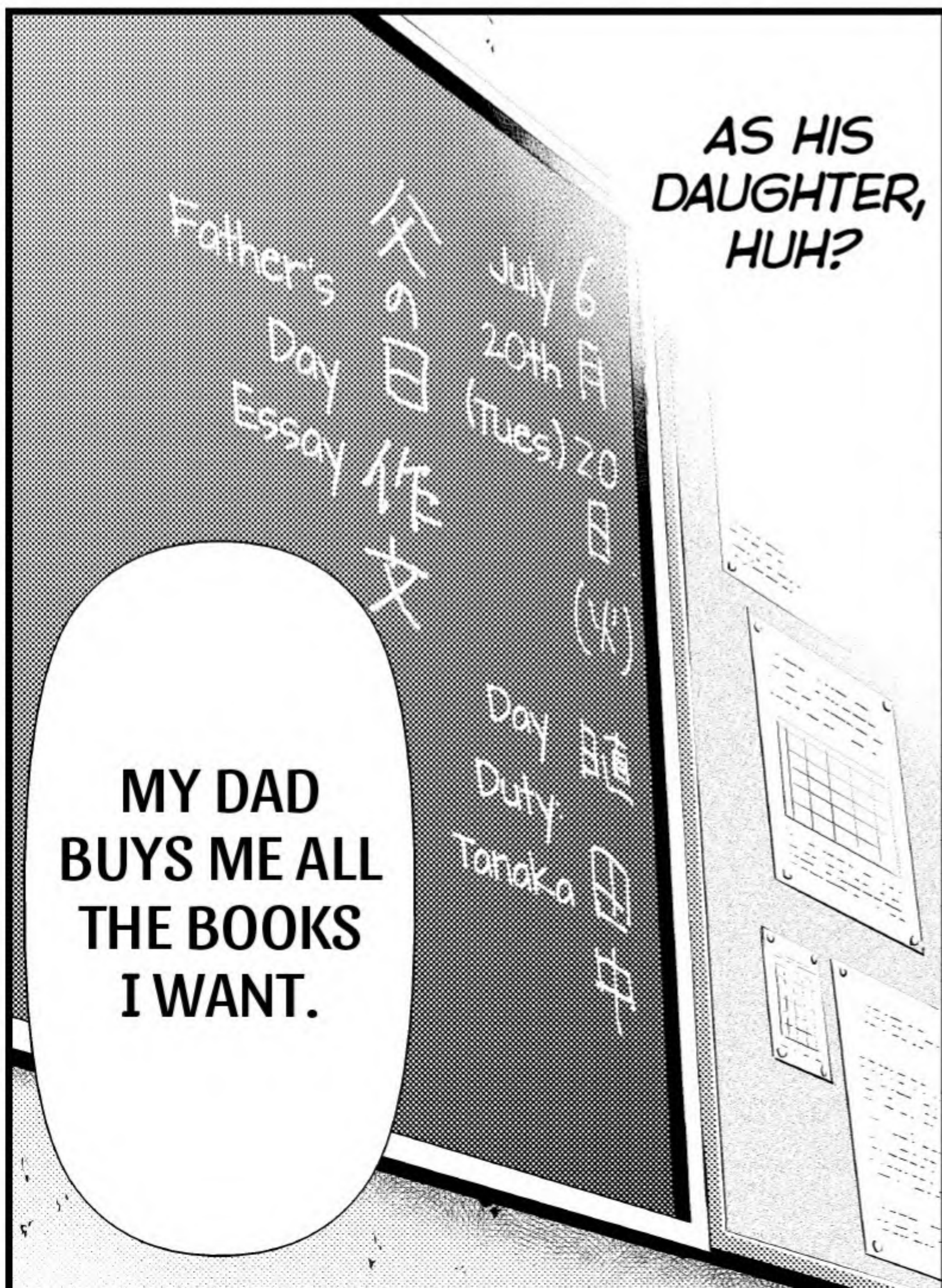
I ALWAYS  
FIGURED  
HE WAS  
JUST SOME  
DIRTBAG.

I NEVER  
IMAGINED  
HE WAS A  
NOVELIST.

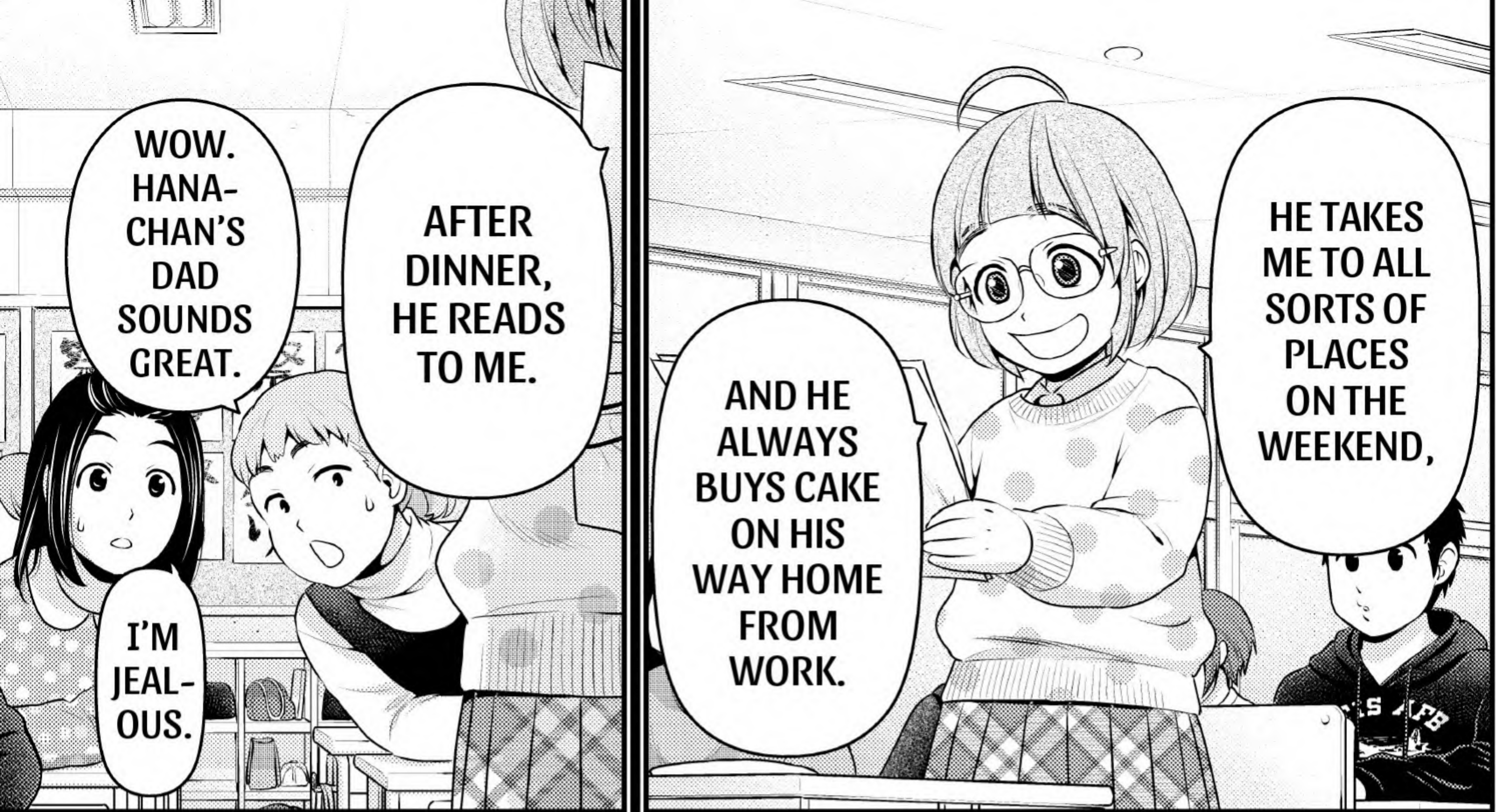
AND THAT  
IT WAS HIS  
FAULT MY  
BROTHER  
DIED.

SHE TOLD  
ME HE WAS  
AN AWFUL  
MAN WHO  
DIDN'T CARE  
ABOUT HIS  
FAMILY,

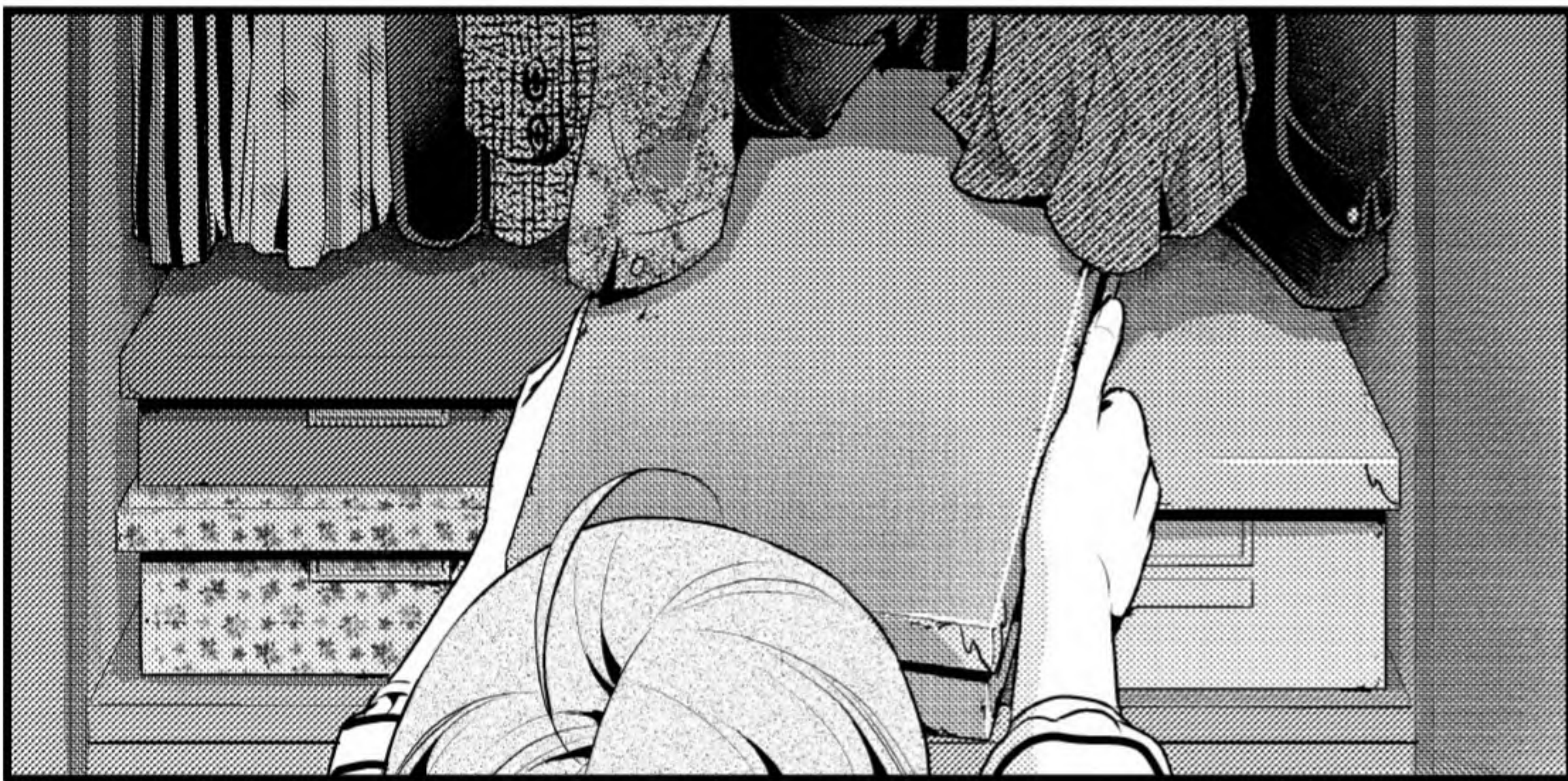
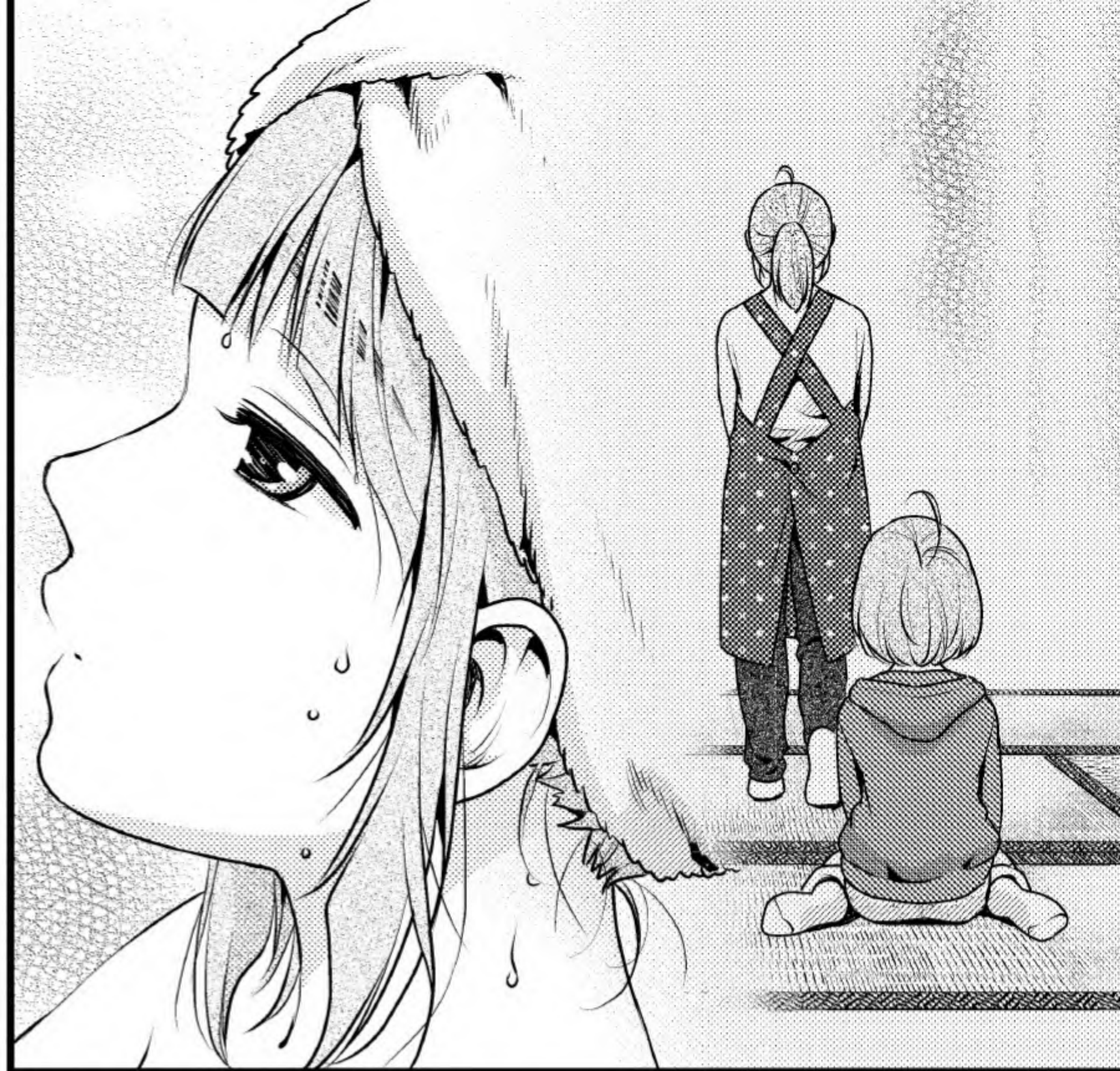










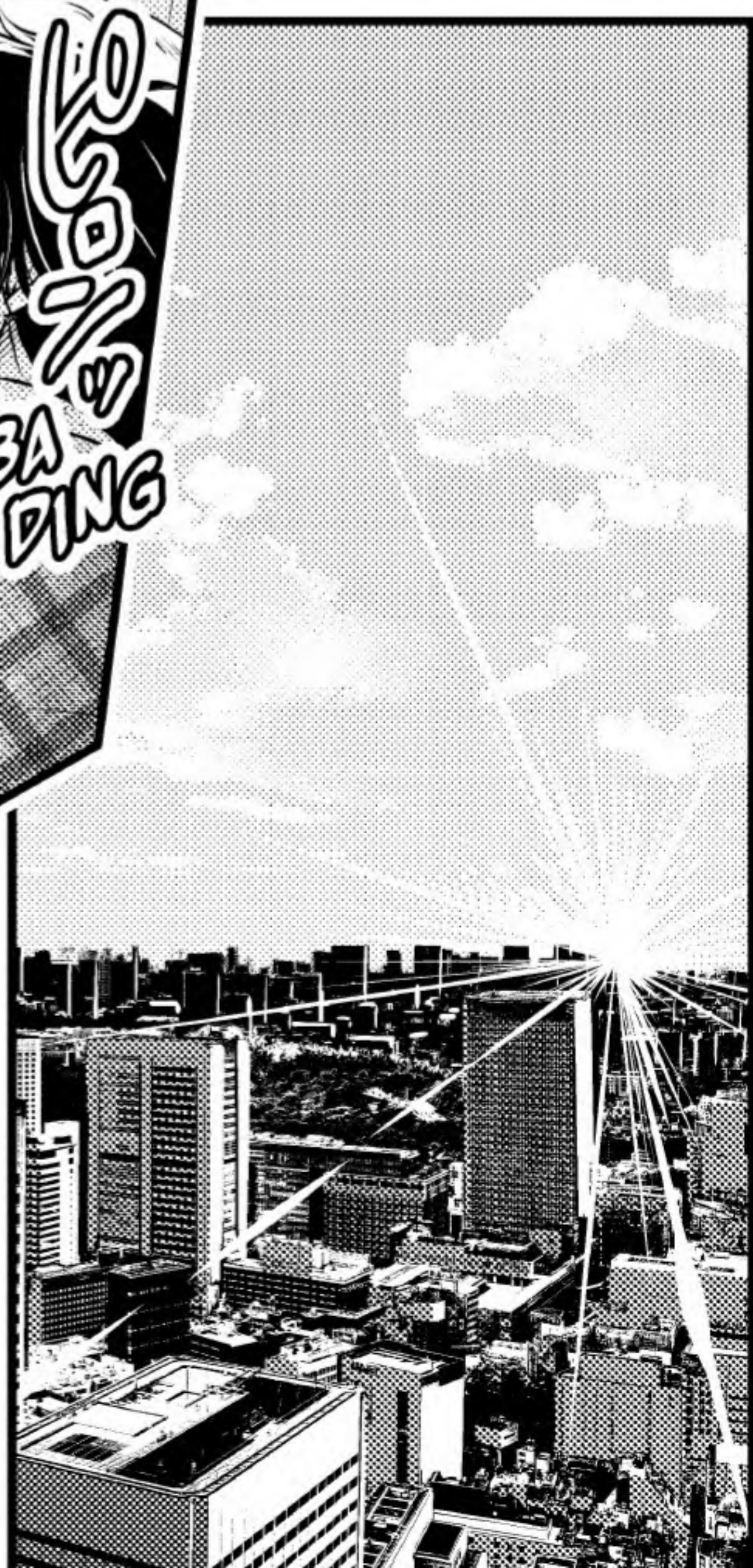
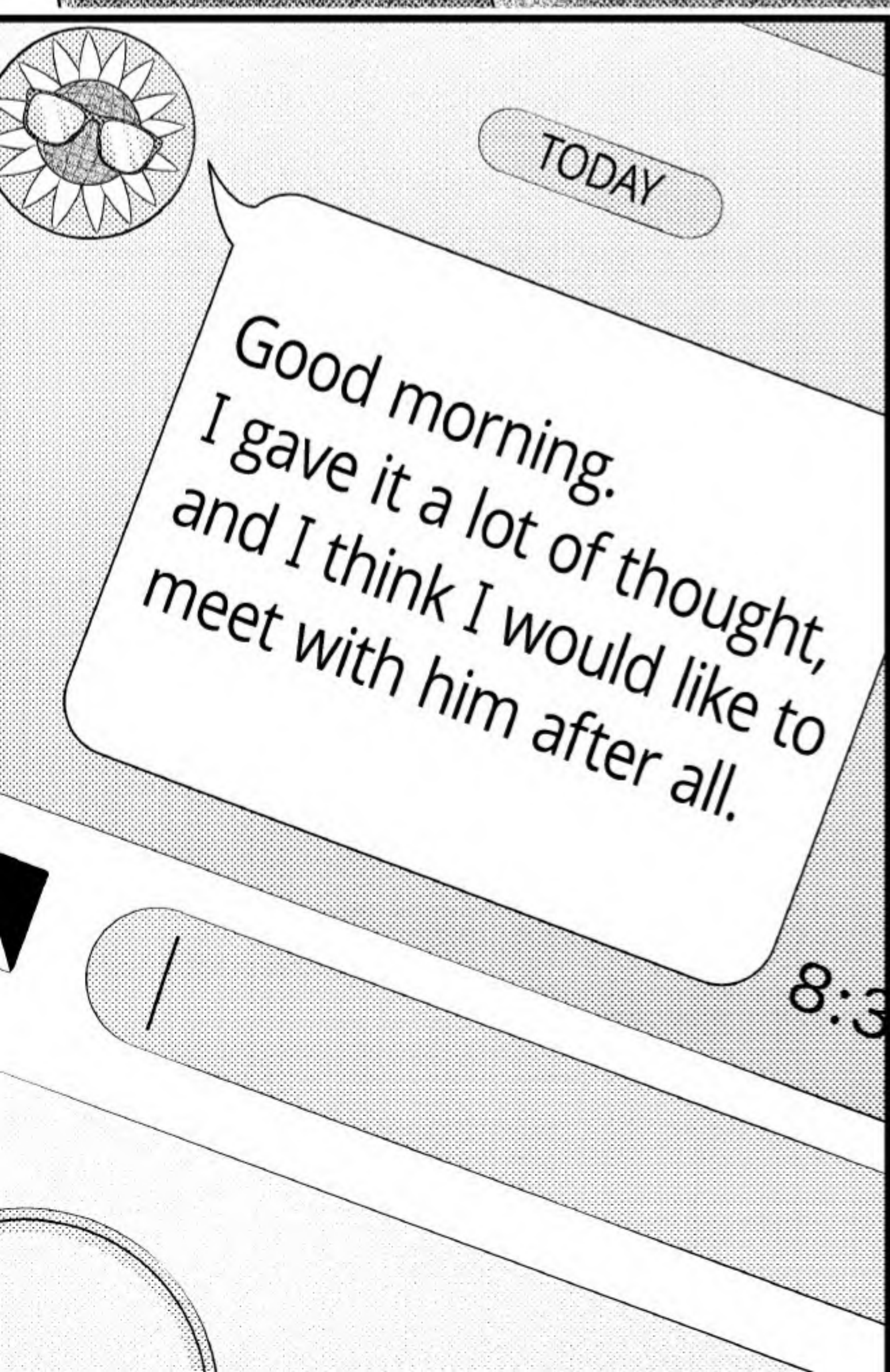






*This book  
is dedicated  
to my loved  
ones,*

*and everyone  
struggling  
through life  
day by day.*







UM.  
DOES YOUR  
MOM...?

NO, I  
HAVEN'T  
TOLD  
HER.

I FIGURED  
SHE DIDN'T  
NEED TO  
KNOW. I'M  
OLD ENOUGH  
TO MAKE  
MY OWN  
DECISIONS.



THANKS  
FOR  
GETTING  
BACK  
TO ME.

SURE  
THING.



MAYBE  
THAT'S  
BECAUSE  
SENSEI'S  
SUFFERED  
A LOT  
TOO.

I  
WAS  
THINK-  
ING,



...DOWN-  
TRODDEN  
PEOPLE  
WHO FEEL  
LIKE THEY  
DON'T HAVE  
A VOICE,  
HUH?

LIKE A  
COMFORTING  
ARM AROUND  
YOUR SHOUL-  
DERS.

A LOT  
OF HIS  
BOOKS  
SEEM  
GEARED  
TOWARDS  
...

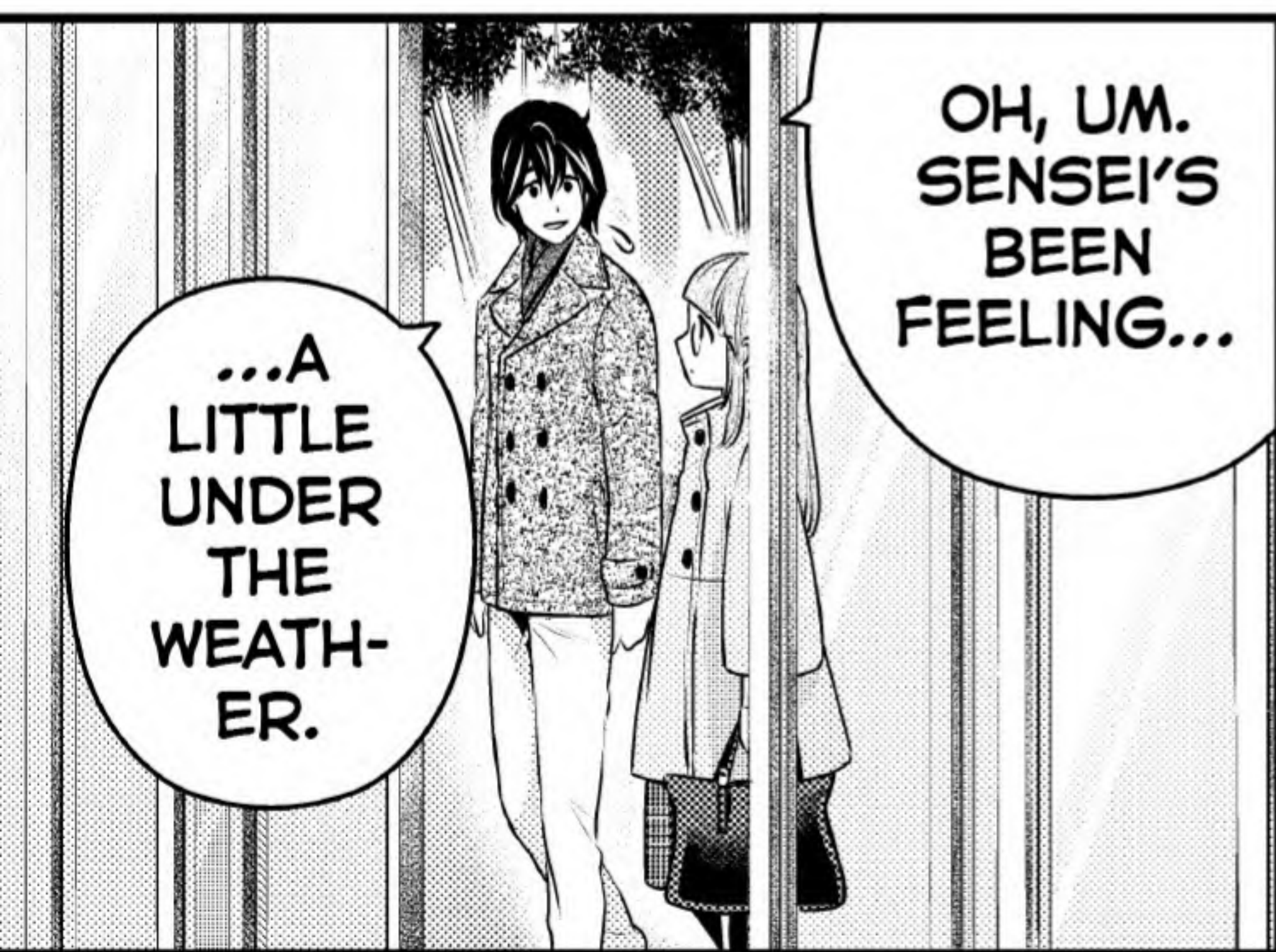
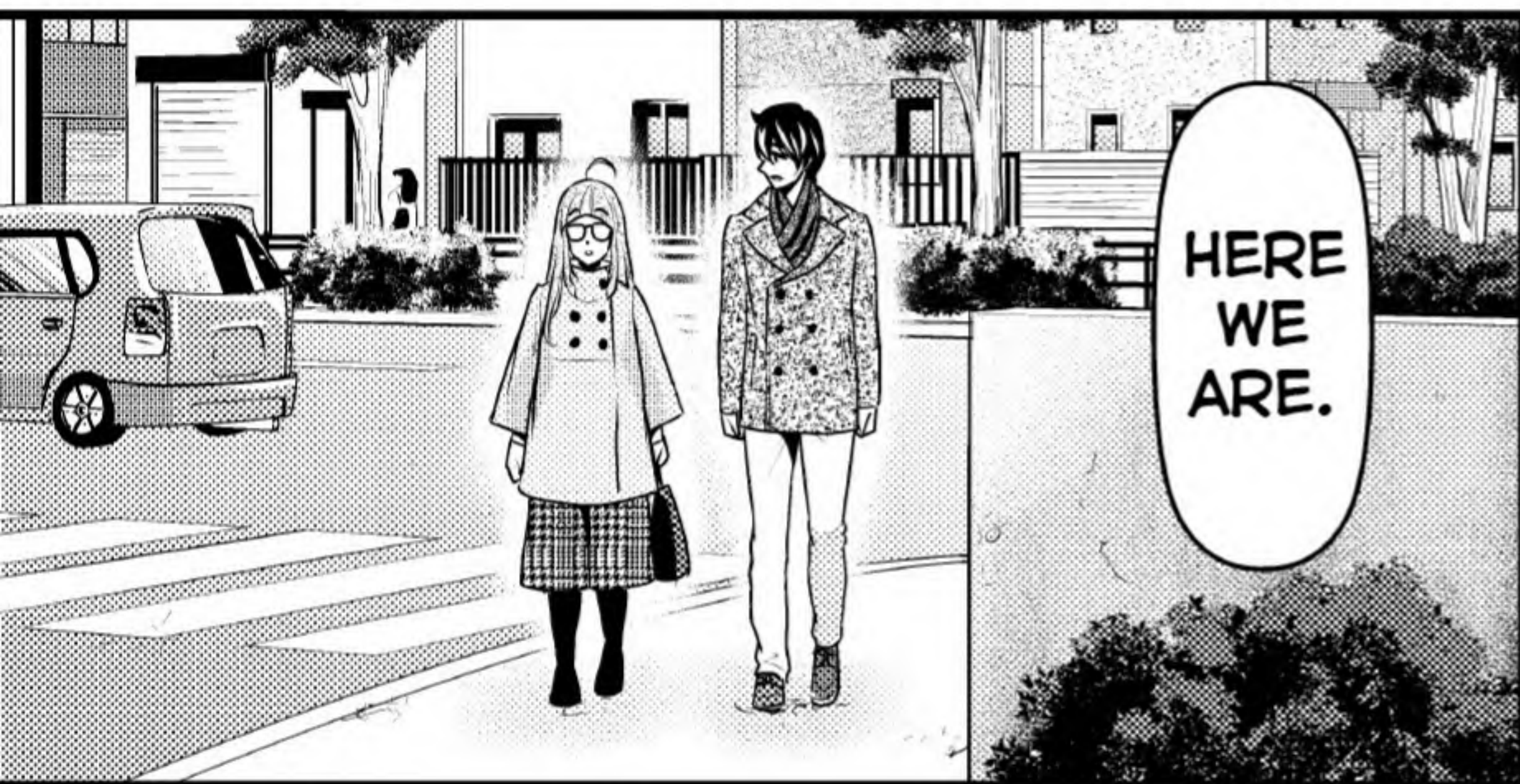
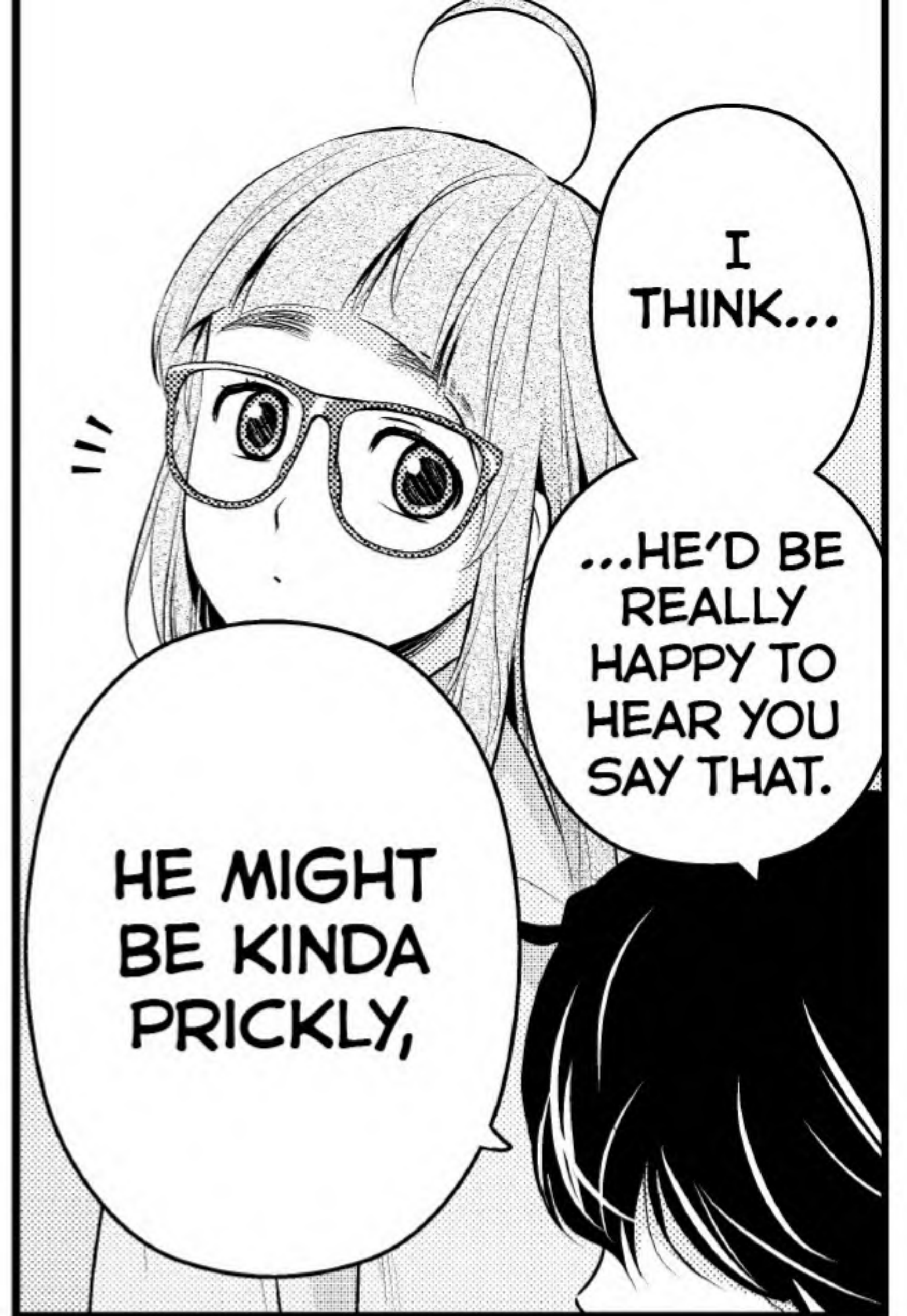
AND I REAL-  
IZED  
SOME-  
THING.



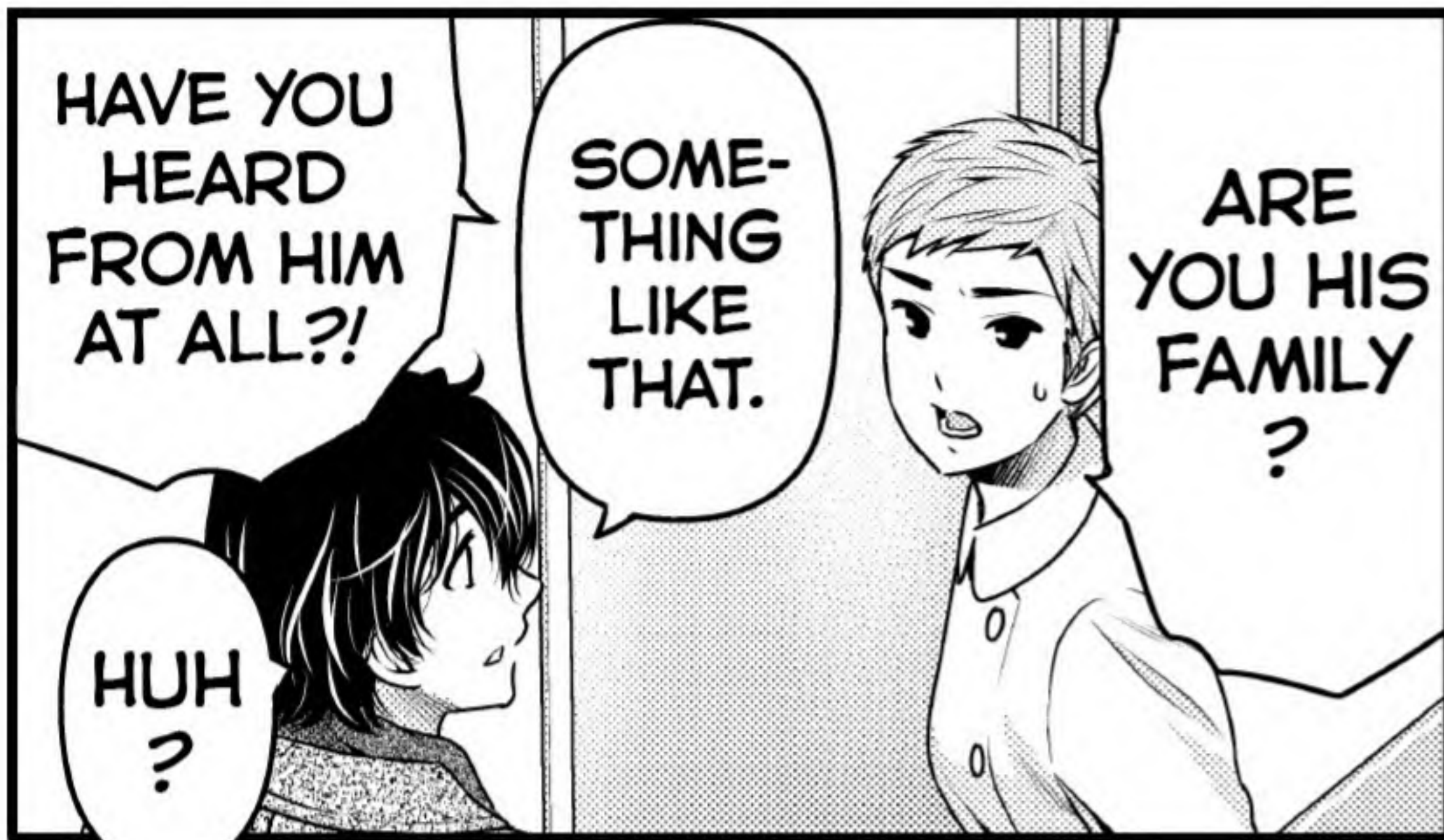
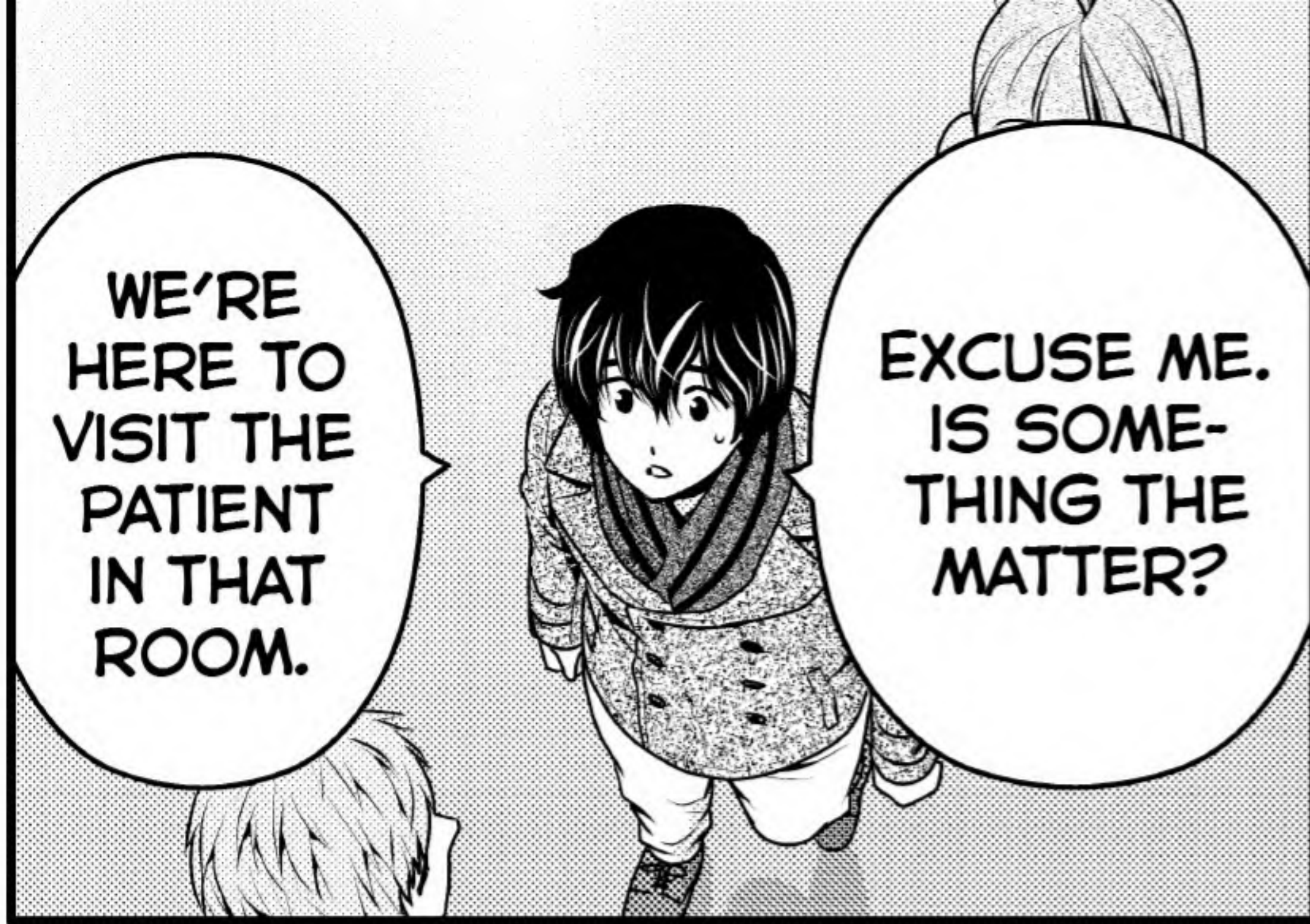
SO,  
LAST  
NIGHT,

I WAS  
FLIPPING  
THROUGH  
SENSEI'S  
BOOKS,  
RIGHT?

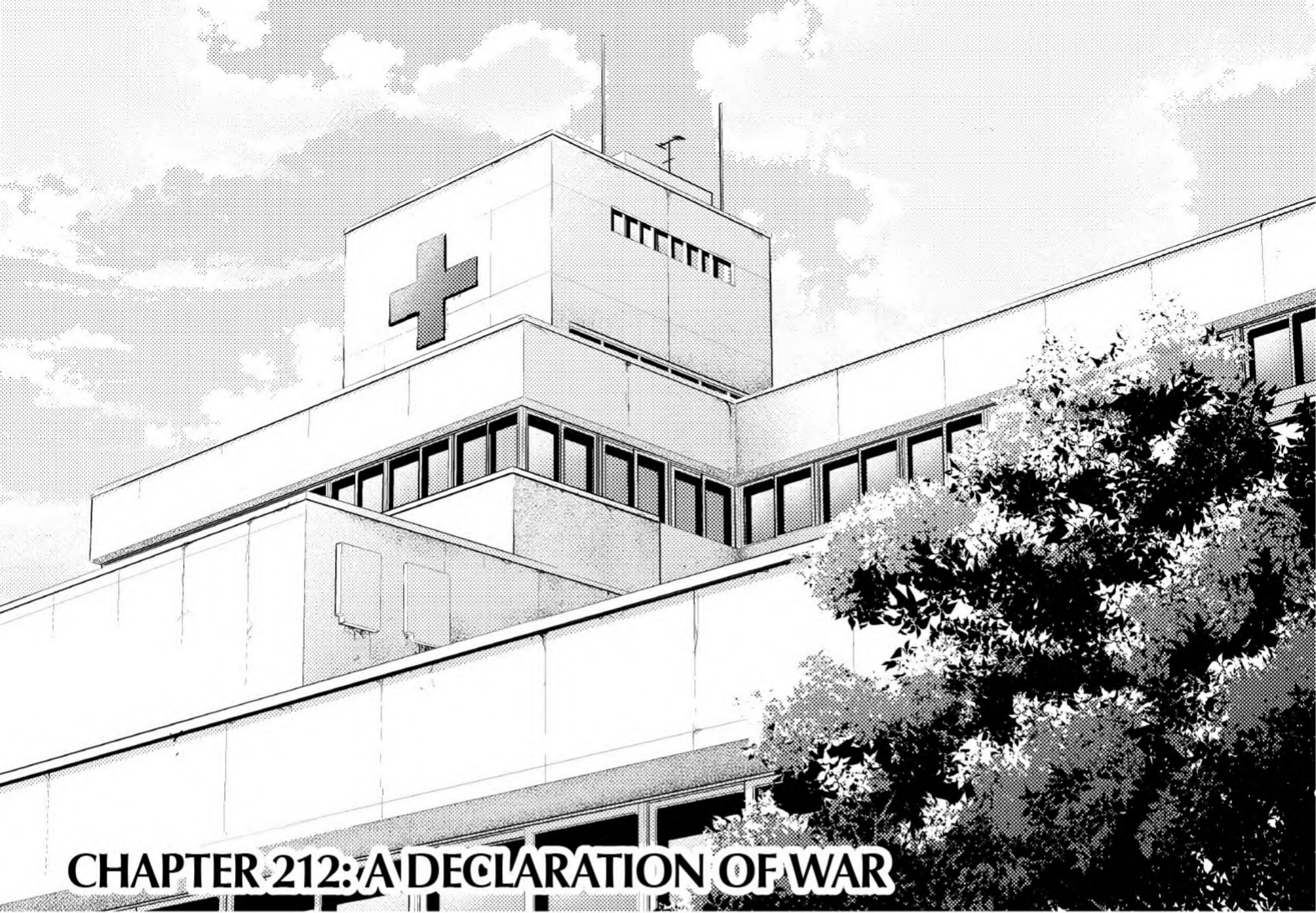




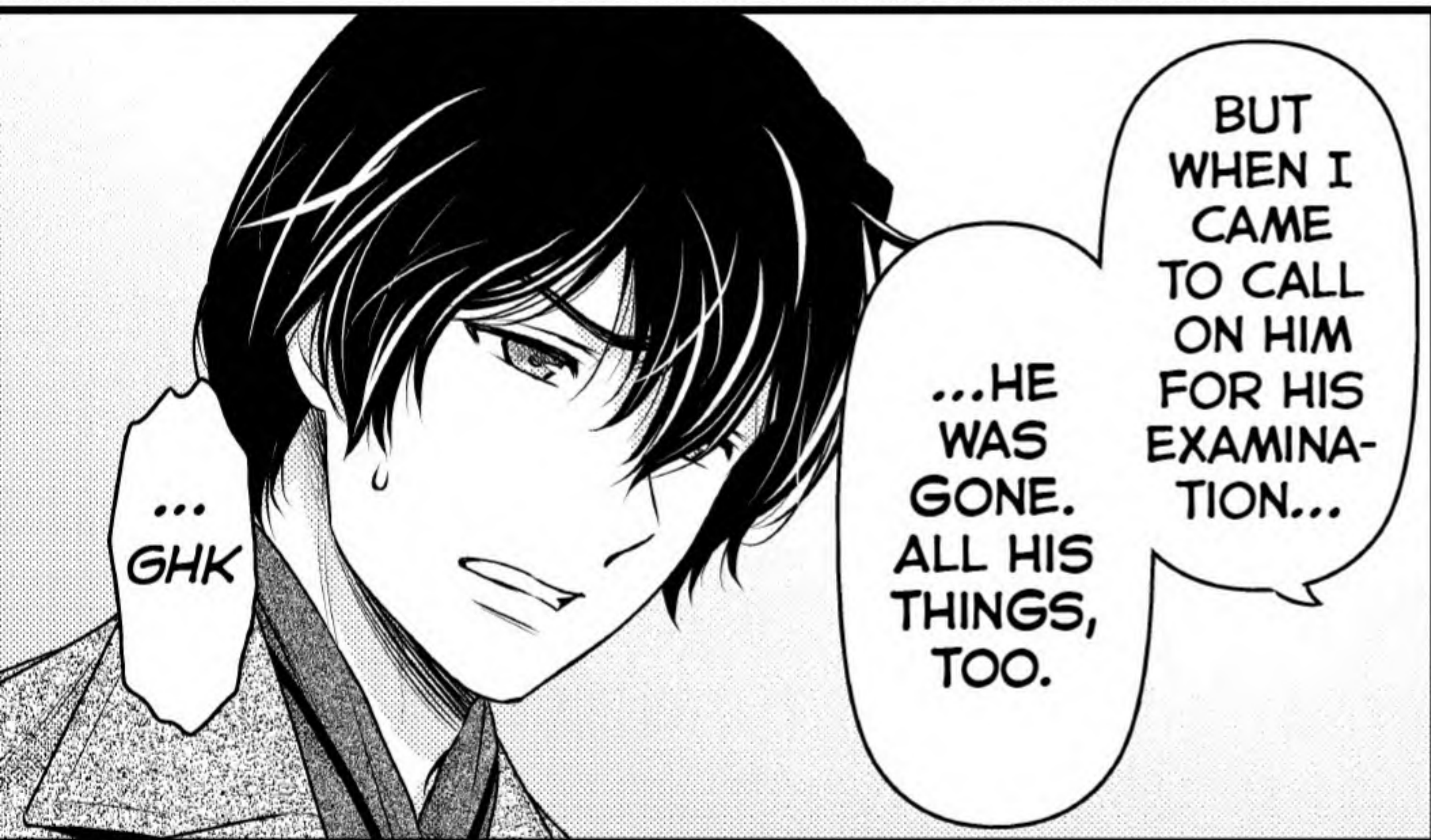








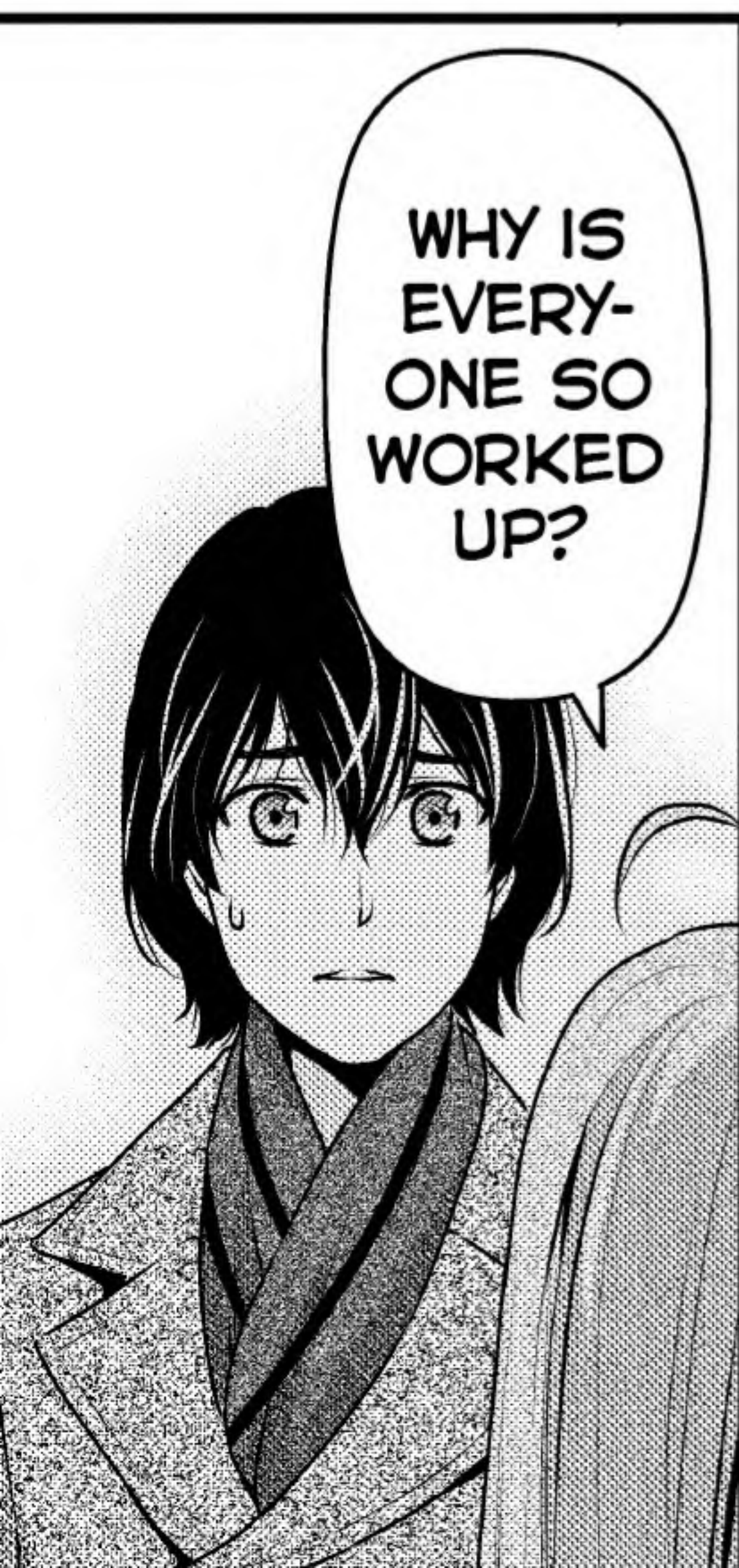
## CHAPTER 212: A DECLARATION OF WAR



...  
GHK

...HE  
WAS  
GONE.  
ALL HIS  
THINGS,  
TOO.

BUT  
WHEN I  
CAME  
TO CALL  
ON HIM  
FOR HIS  
EXAMINA-  
TION...



WHY IS  
EVERY-  
ONE SO  
WORKED  
UP?



H-  
HEY  
...

I'LL TRY  
CALLING  
HIS HOME  
AGAIN.

YOU  
SAID HE  
WAS JUST  
FEELING  
A LITTLE  
UNDER THE  
WEATHER,  
RIGHT?



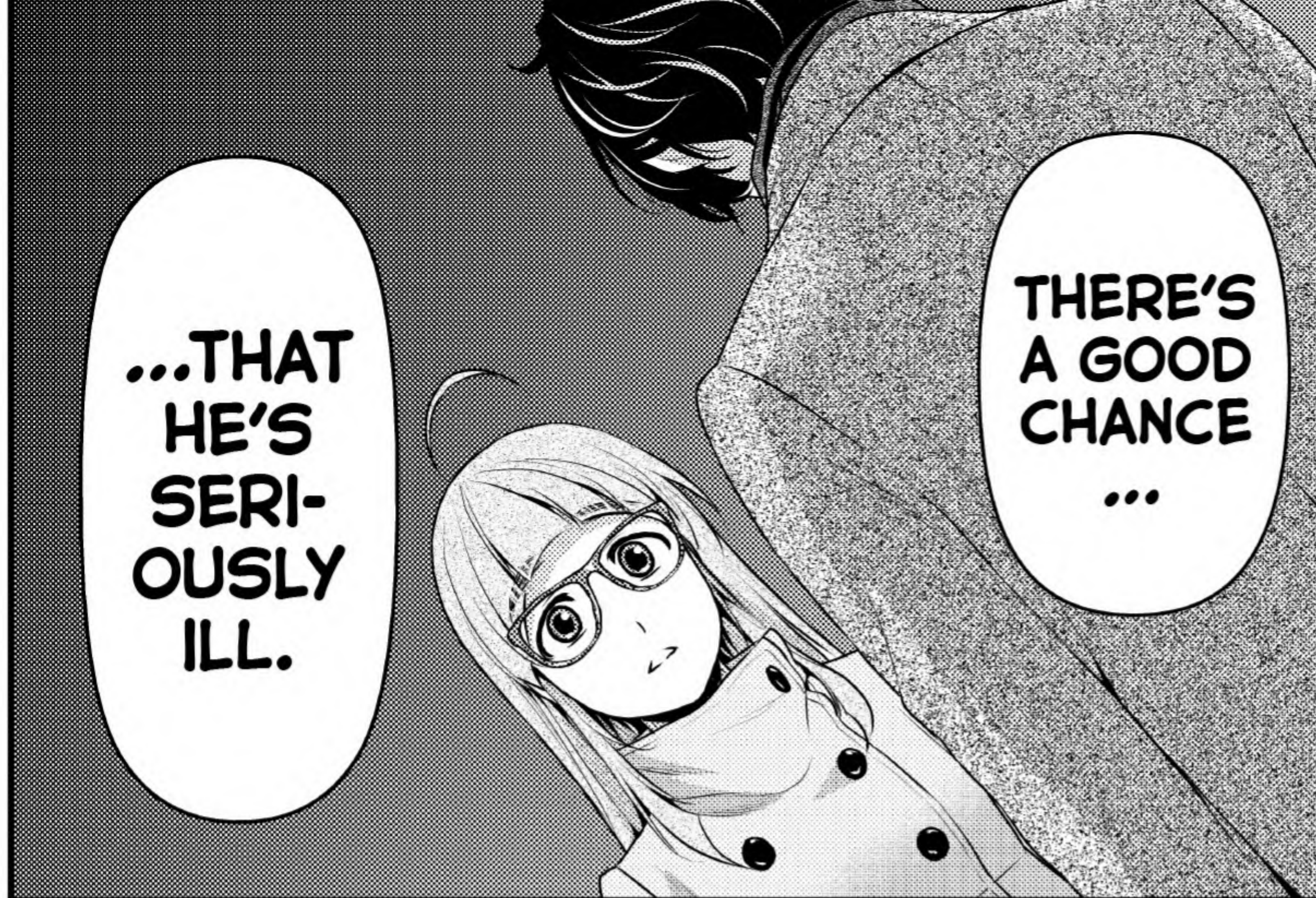
BUT IT  
CAN'T  
HAVE  
BEEN  
THAT  
LONG.

I'M  
AFRAID  
I DON'T  
KNOW.

SINCE  
WHEN  
?!

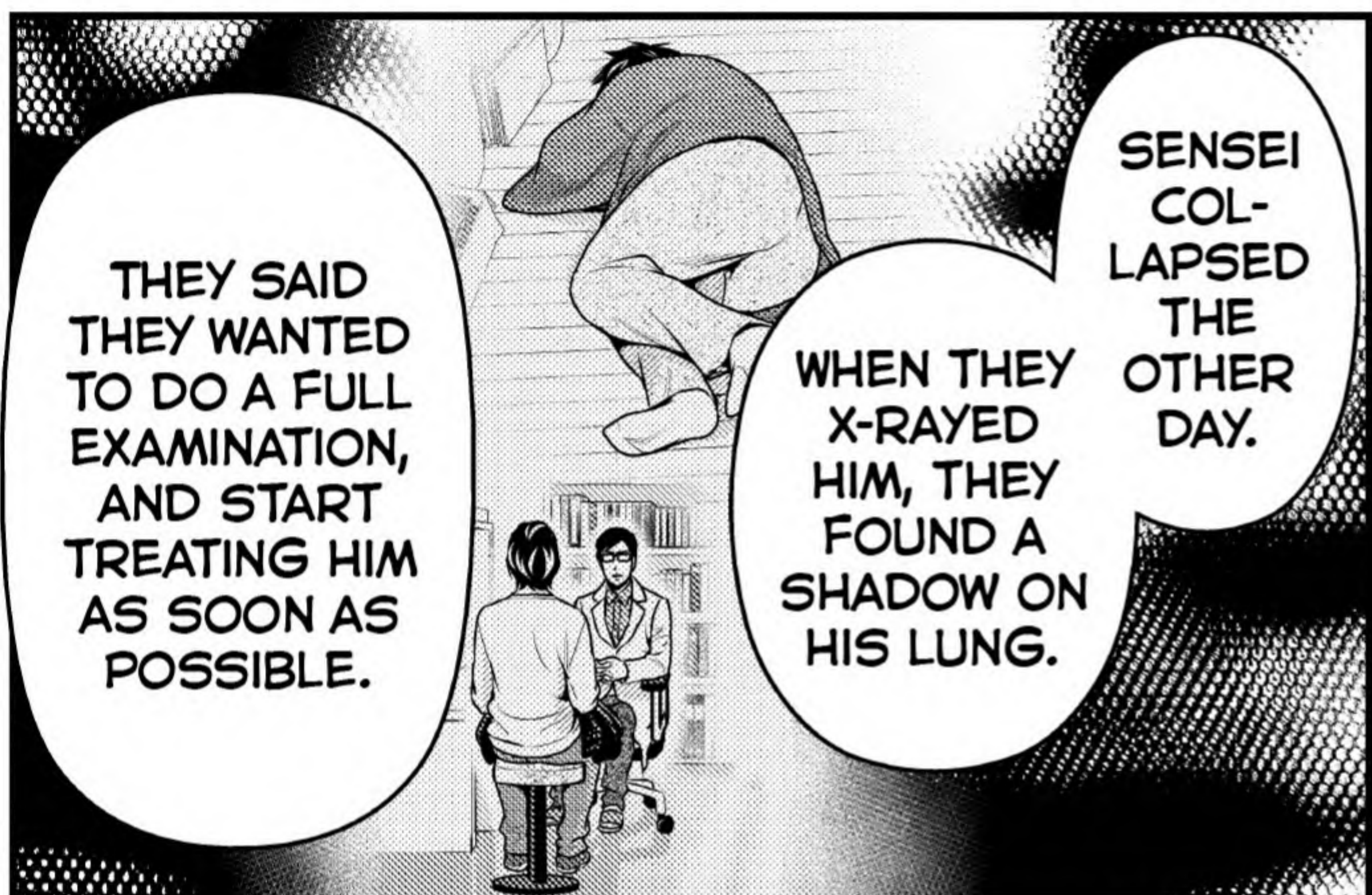
HE WAS  
HERE  
WHEN I  
MADE THE  
ROUNDS  
THIS  
MORNING.





...THAT HE'S SERIOUSLY ILL.

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE ...



THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO DO A FULL EXAMINATION, AND START TREATING HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WHEN THEY X-RAYED HIM, THEY FOUND A SHADOW ON HIS LUNG.

SENSEI COLLAPSED THE OTHER DAY.



I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO WORRY YOU.

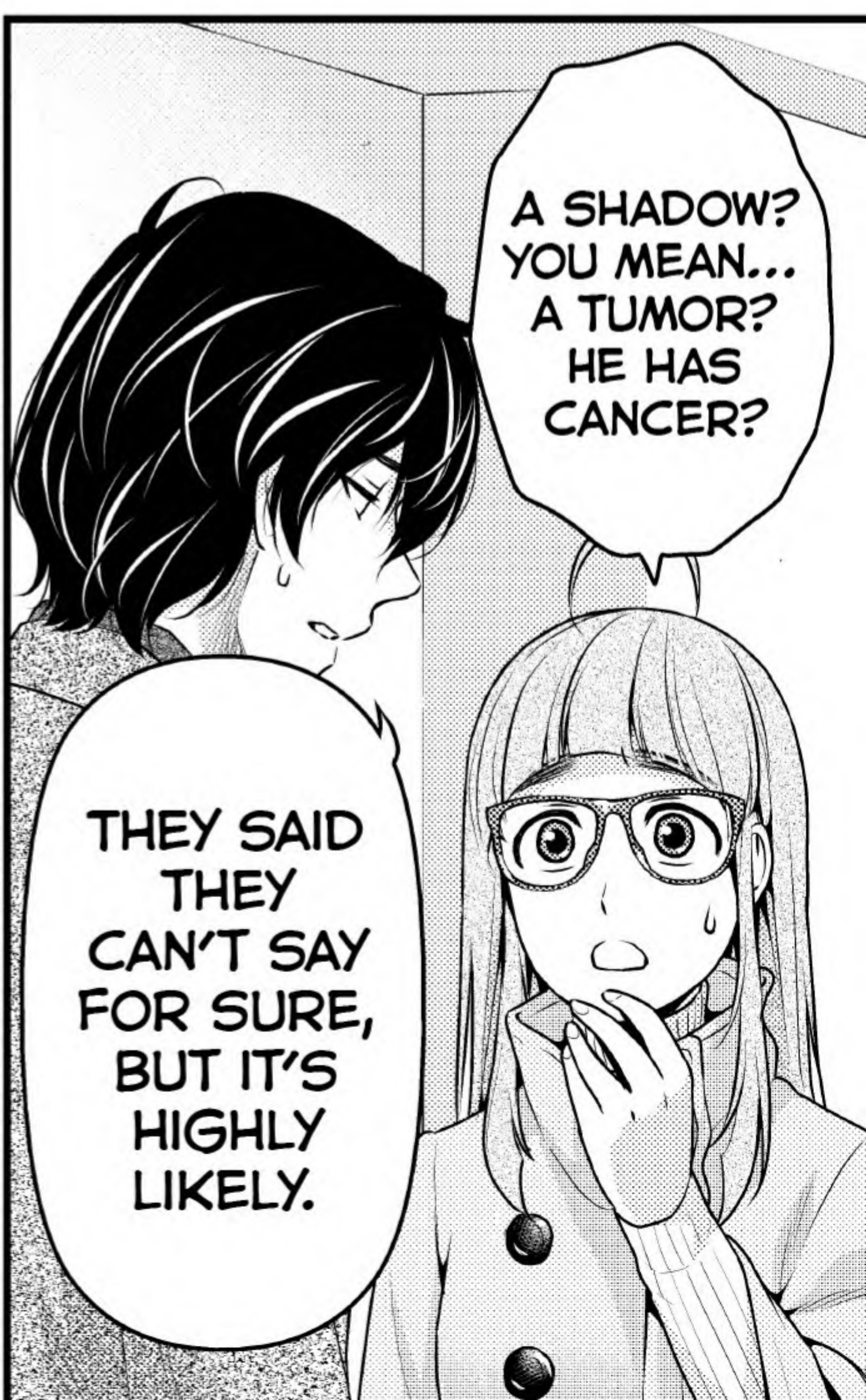
I'M SORRY FOR LYING.

HUH ...



WE'VE GOTTA SEARCH ALL THE PLACES HE COULD BE!

IF HE DOESN'T GET IT TREATED, HE'S ONLY GONNA COLLAPSE AGAIN!



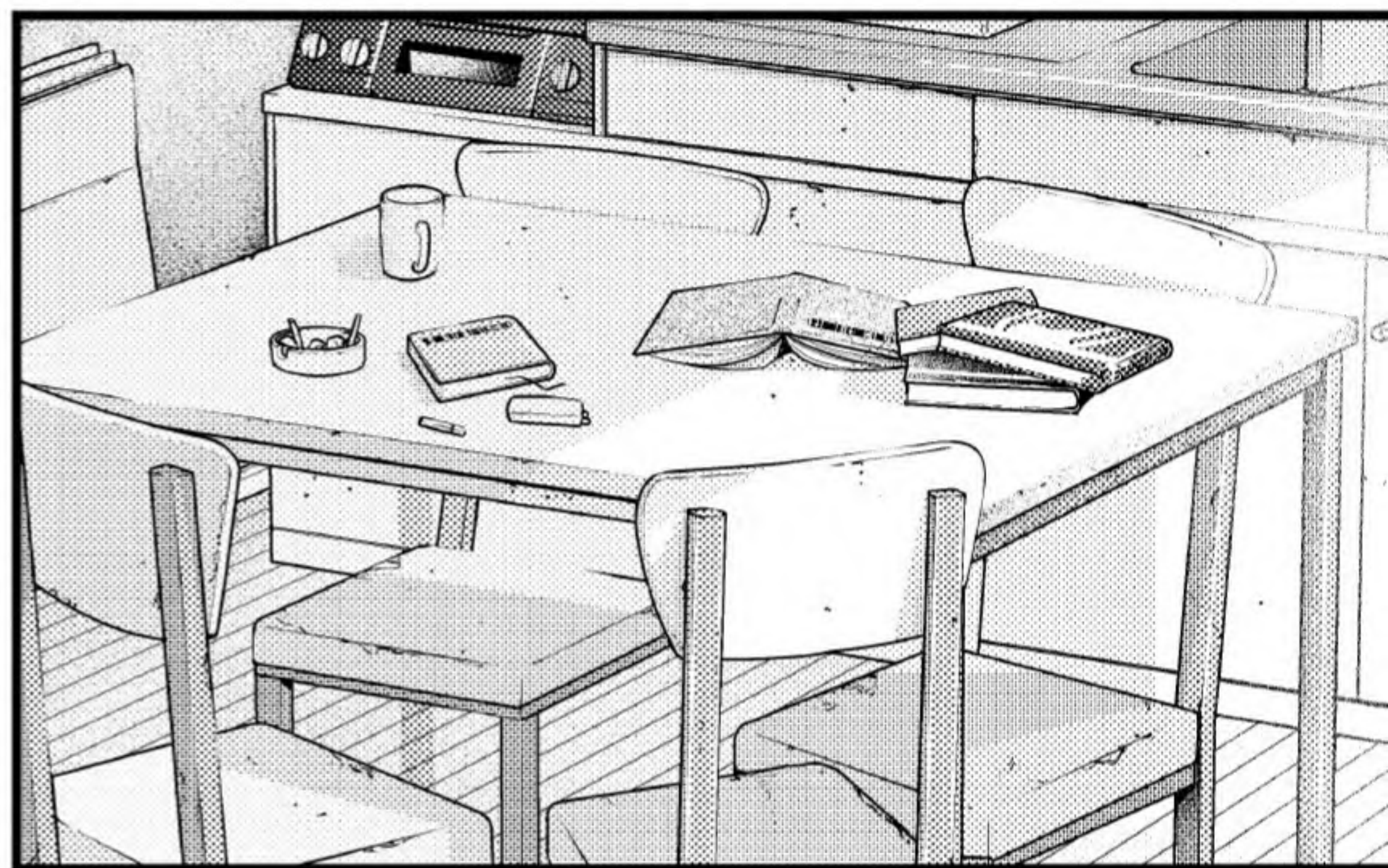
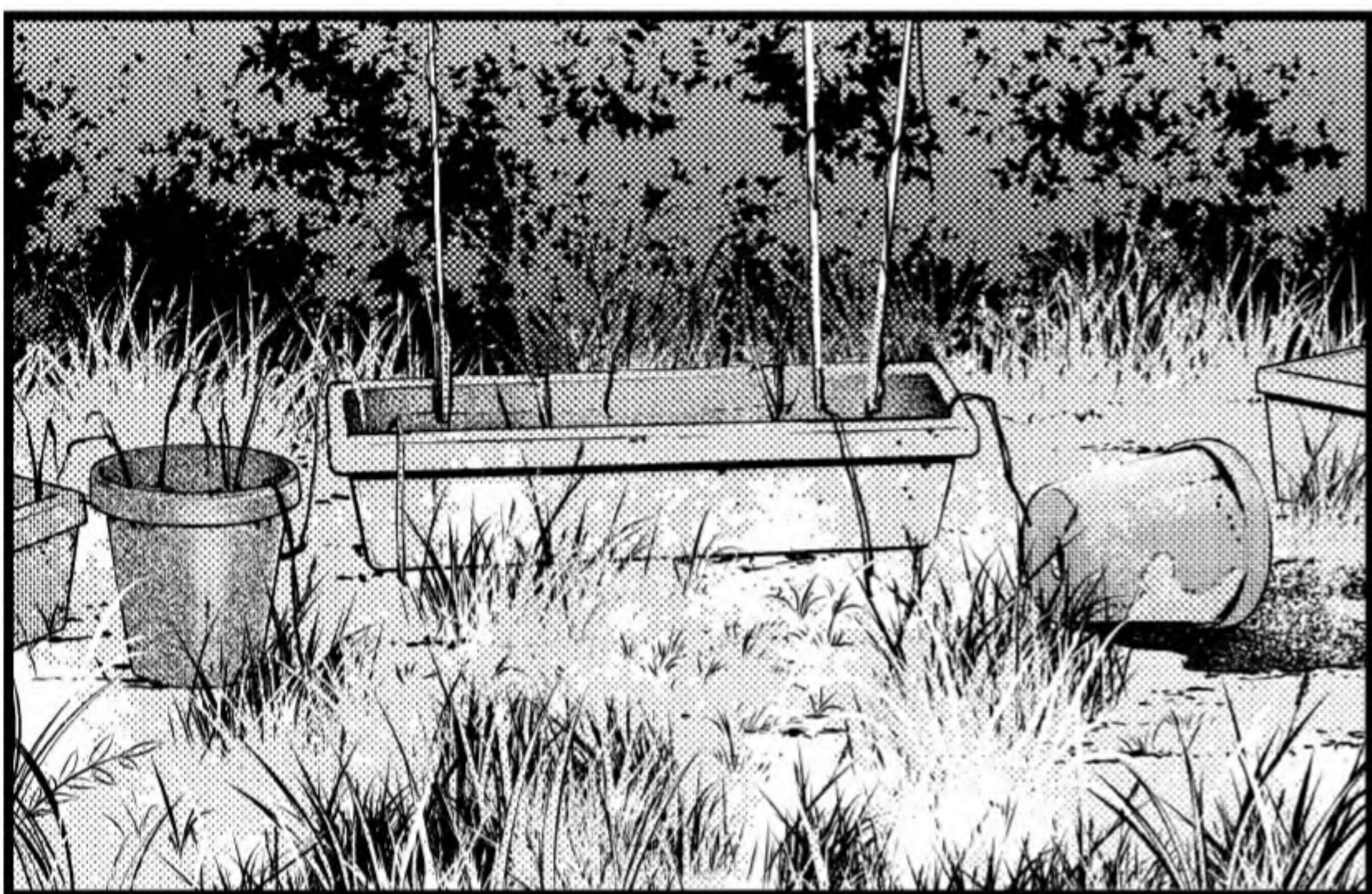
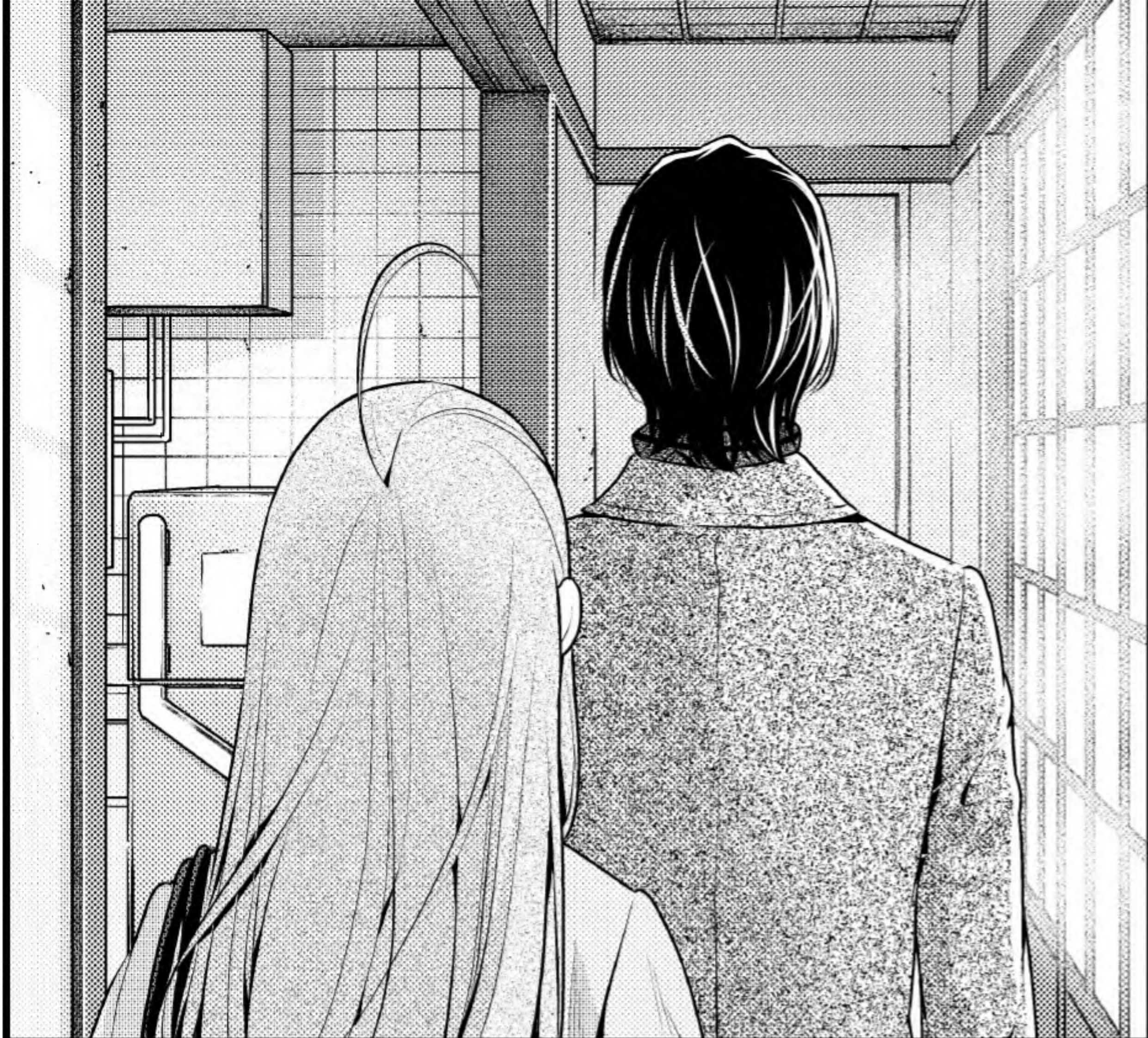
THEY SAID THEY CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, BUT IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY.

A SHADOW? YOU MEAN... A TUMOR? HE HAS CANCER?













...ALWAYS  
LIVED  
HERE  
ALONE...?

HAS  
HE...



HIS THINGS  
FROM THE  
HOSPITAL ARE  
HERE, SO HE  
MUST HAVE  
BEEN HERE  
FOR A WHILE.

WHERE  
THE HELL  
DID HE  
GO...?



WOW  
!

THIS  
IS MY  
DREAM  
ROOM!

A  
SEA  
OF  
BOOKS!



HE MUST  
HAVE  
HEADED  
TO THESE  
INTER-  
VIEWS!

HE'S  
WRITTEN  
THEIR  
CONTACT  
DETAILS,  
TOO.

THAT'S  
TODAY'S  
DATE!



GOD  
DAMN  
IT!



HERE!

• Oshikawa's  
House

Imai's House

• Kitami's House,

Arakawa 15:00-

Suzuki's House 09:00

Murata's House 09:00



HE  
REALLY  
DOES  
HAVE A  
DEATH  
WISH!

WORK-  
ING AT  
A TIME  
LIKE  
THIS!





THE SUR-  
GERY.

HE  
DOESN'T  
WANT TO  
DO IT.



IS HIS  
CONDI-  
TION  
REALLY  
THAT  
BAD?

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?

HUH  
...?



AS IF YOU  
CAN ATONE  
BY LETTING  
YOURSELF  
DIE!

"THIS IS  
MY FATE,"  
"I'VE GOT TO  
ACCEPT MY  
PUNISHMENT,"  
YADA YADA.

...!



WE CAN  
USE THIS  
TO FIND  
HIM!

IF WE  
JUST HEAD  
TO THESE  
PLACES  
IN ORDER,  
WE'RE SURE  
TO RUN  
INTO HIM!

利家  
今井 090-0000-XXXX  
北尾家 荒川区  
15:00-  
鈴木 090-0000-XXXX  
090-0000-XXXX  
0000-XXXX



DASH

?!

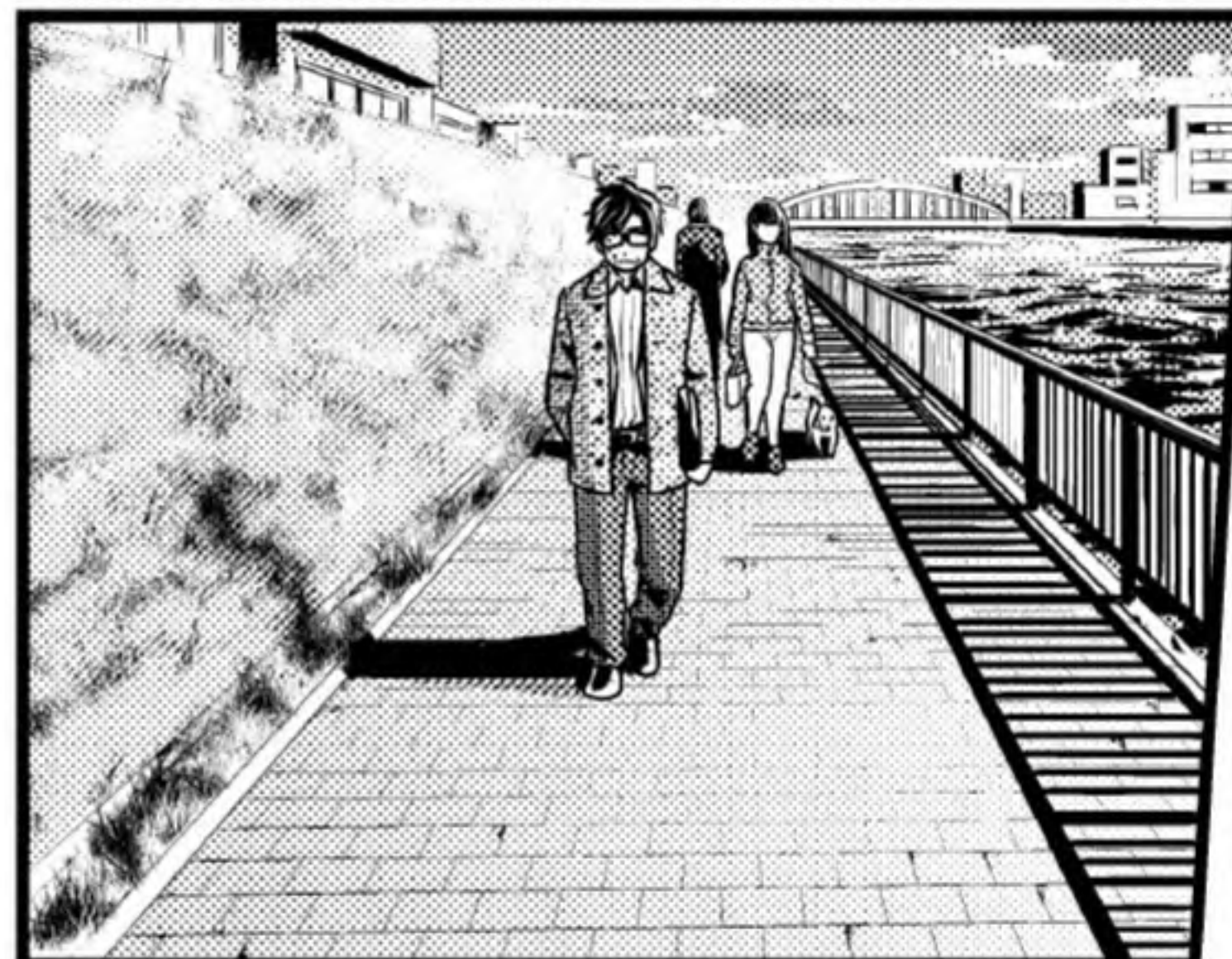
HANA-  
SEMPAI  
?



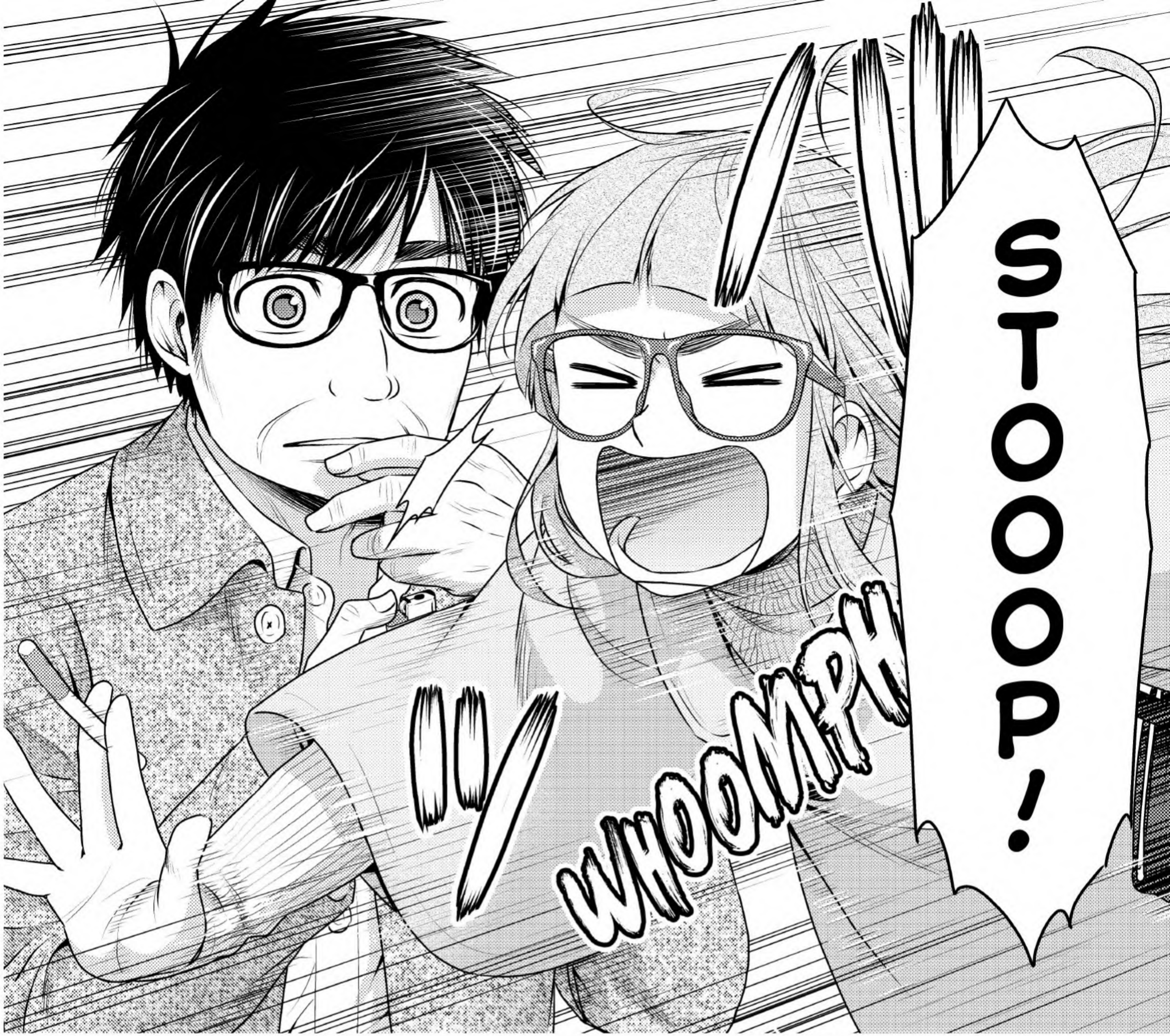
THIS ISN'T  
GOING TO  
BRING HIS  
SON-

B  
A  
M

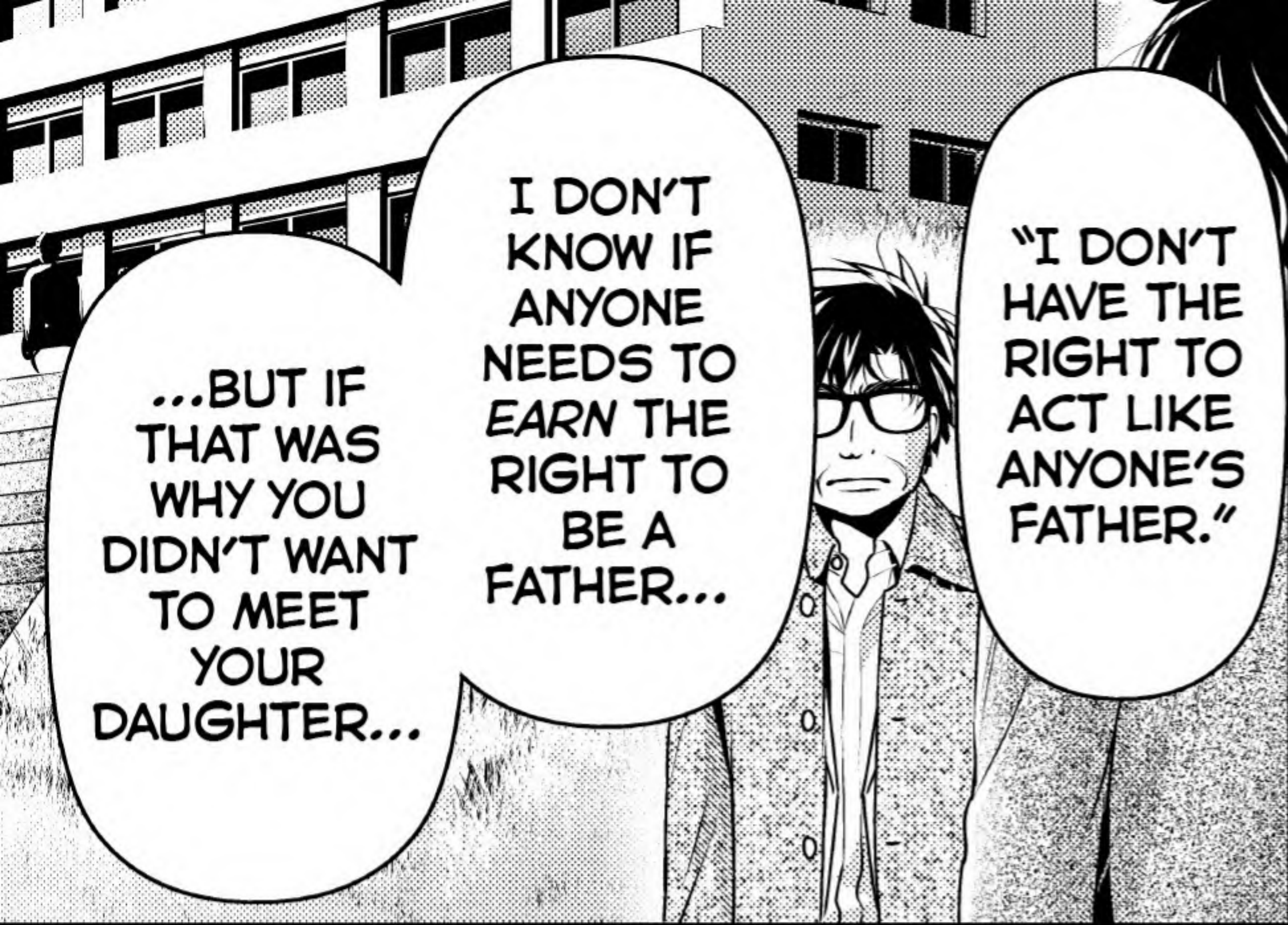












...BUT IF THAT WAS WHY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO MEET YOUR DAUGHTER...

I DON'T KNOW IF ANYONE NEEDS TO EARN THE RIGHT TO BE A FATHER...

"I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO ACT LIKE ANYONE'S FATHER."



WHAT ?!

SENSEI... YOU SAID TO ME...



...YOU REALLY WANTED TO BE A GOOD FATHER, RIGHT?

THAT MUST MEAN ...



?!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT!



THAT'S WHY I COULD NEVER FACE HER!

THERE'S NO WAY I EVER COULD BE!

EX-CUSE ME!





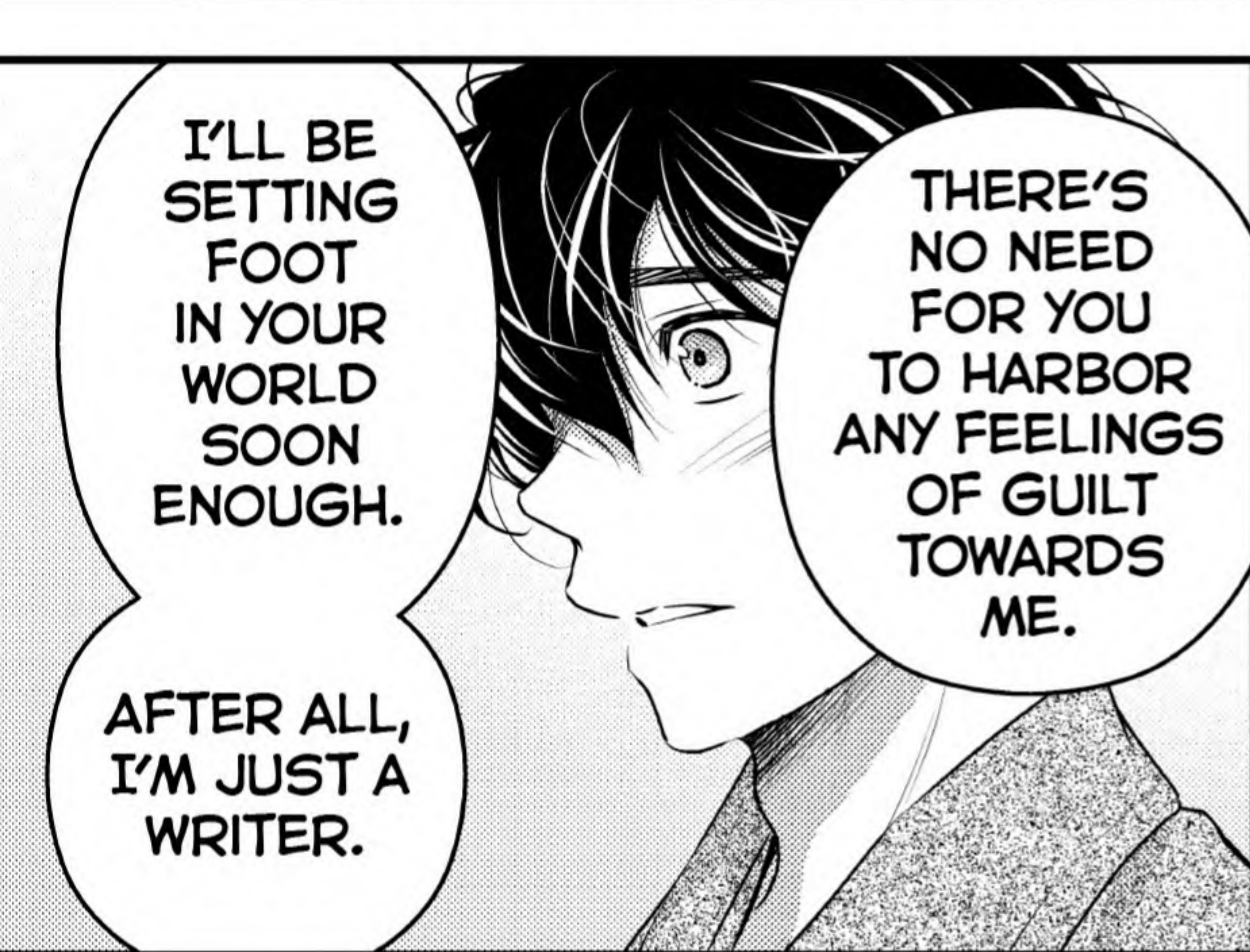






...WHAT  
MAKES  
YOU WRITE  
THE WAY  
YOU DO.

I'VE  
ALWAYS  
WON-  
DERED  
...



I'LL BE  
SETTING  
FOOT  
IN YOUR  
WORLD  
SOON  
ENOUGH.

THERE'S  
NO NEED  
FOR YOU  
TO HARBOR  
ANY FEELINGS  
OF GUILT  
TOWARDS  
ME.

AFTER ALL,  
I'M JUST A  
WRITER.



SO I  
CAME HERE  
TODAY, AS A  
FLEDGLING  
WRITER...



IF YOU  
HAVE THE  
TIME...

AH...



IT'S MY  
LATEST  
WORK.  
I JUST  
FINISHED  
IT LAST  
NIGHT.

SO...  
I'D REALLY  
APPRECIATE  
IT IF YOU'D  
TAKE A  
LOOK AT  
THIS.

...TO MEET  
YOU, AS A  
WRITER,  
SENSEI.









ても  
奇  
理

夜明 Before  
け the  
前 Dawn

華村 Kazumi  
村 Hanamura

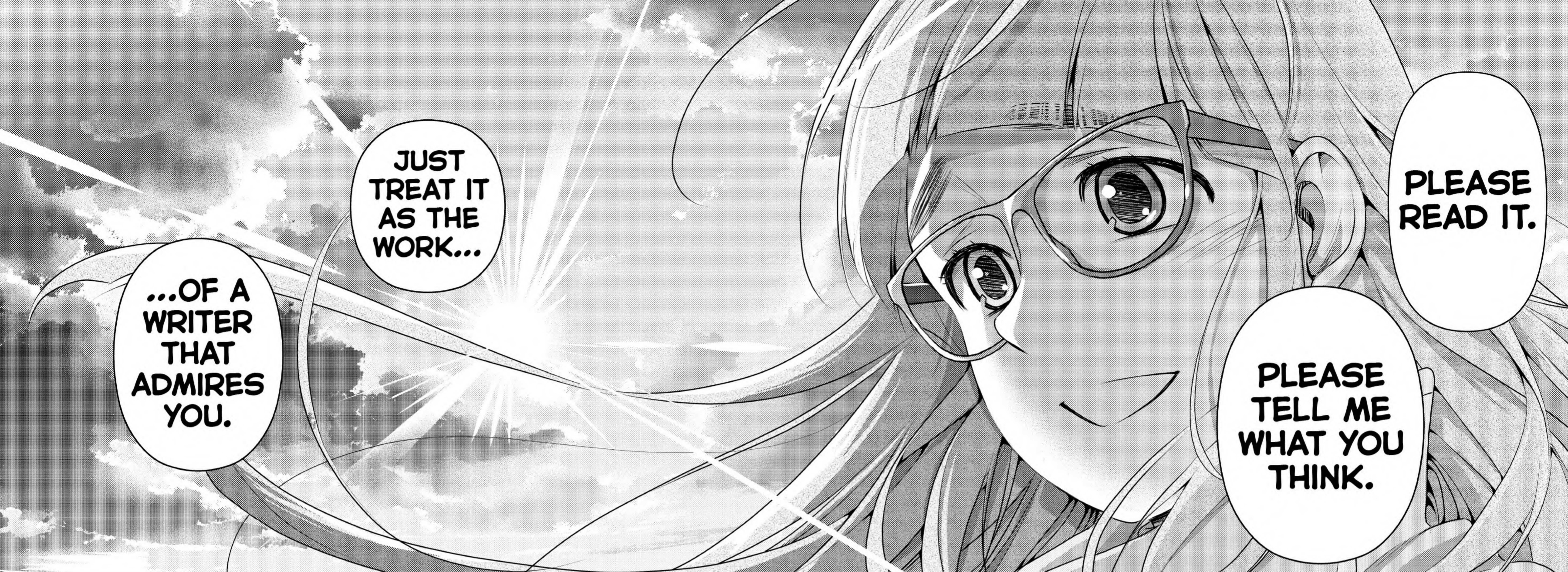


THOUGH I  
DON'T KNOW  
IF THAT WILL  
BE FIVE YEARS,  
OR TEN YEARS  
FROM NOW.

I'M  
DETERMINED  
TO WRITE A  
BOOK THAT  
SURPASSES  
ANY OF  
YOURS,  
SENSEI.

I'M  
POSITIVELY  
...  
...BURST-  
ING WITH  
FASCINATING  
THINGS  
TO WRITE  
ABOUT.





PLEASE  
READ IT.

PLEASE  
TELL ME  
WHAT YOU  
THINK.

JUST  
TREAT IT  
AS THE  
WORK...

...OF A  
WRITER  
THAT  
ADMIRE  
S YOU.



JUST A  
GLANCE  
AT THIS  
THING AND  
I ALREADY  
FOUND A  
PROBLEM.

YOU  
SHOULD  
OPEN WITH  
YOUR FIFTH  
LINE. GET  
STRAIGHT  
TO THE  
POINT.

YOUR  
INTRO-  
DUC-  
TION IS  
WEAK.

WHEN WERE  
YA PLANNING  
ON SUR-  
PASSING ME,  
AGAIN?

READERS  
THESE  
DAYS ARE  
IMPATIENT.



DADDY!

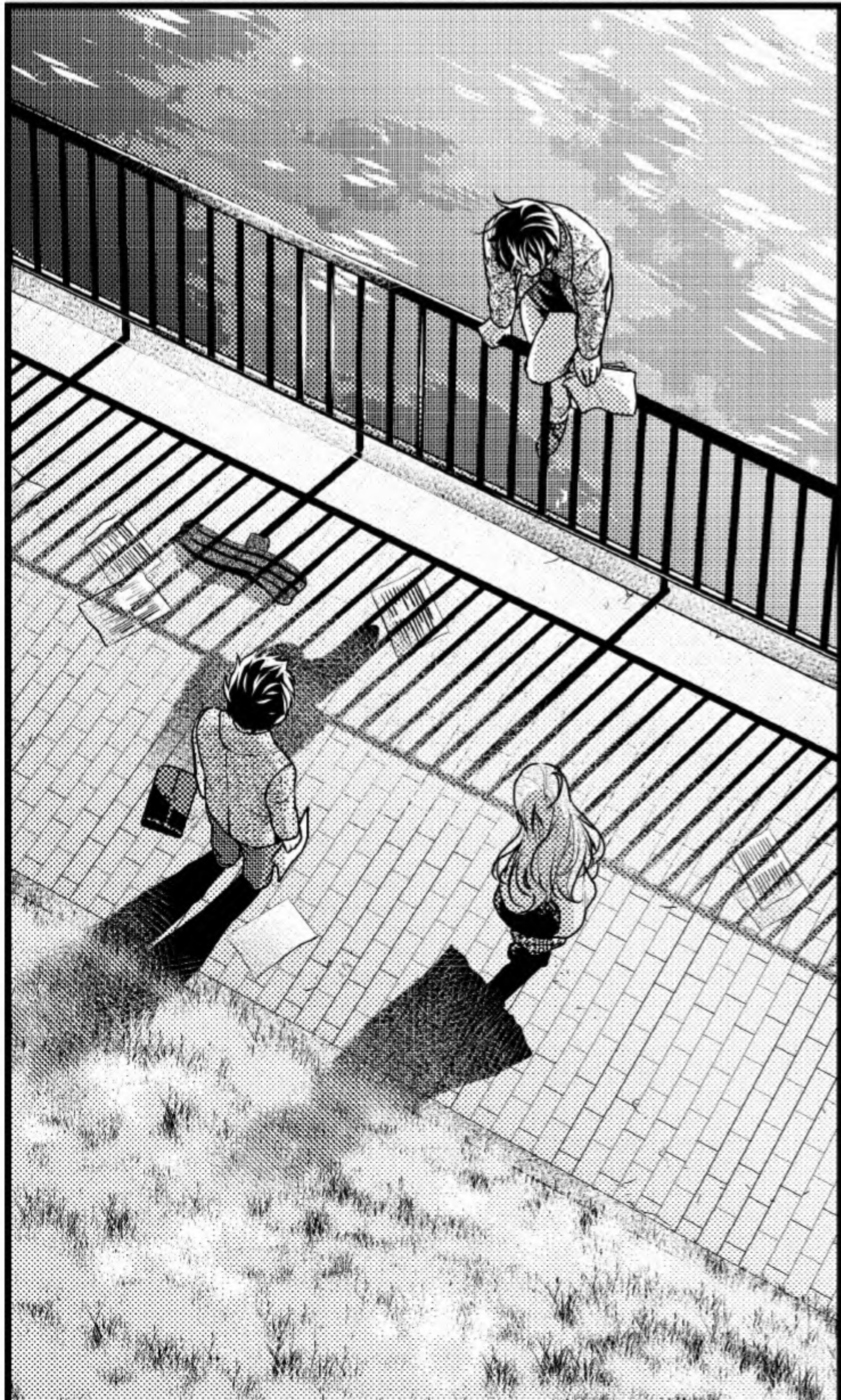
LET'S  
PLAY!



DADDY!











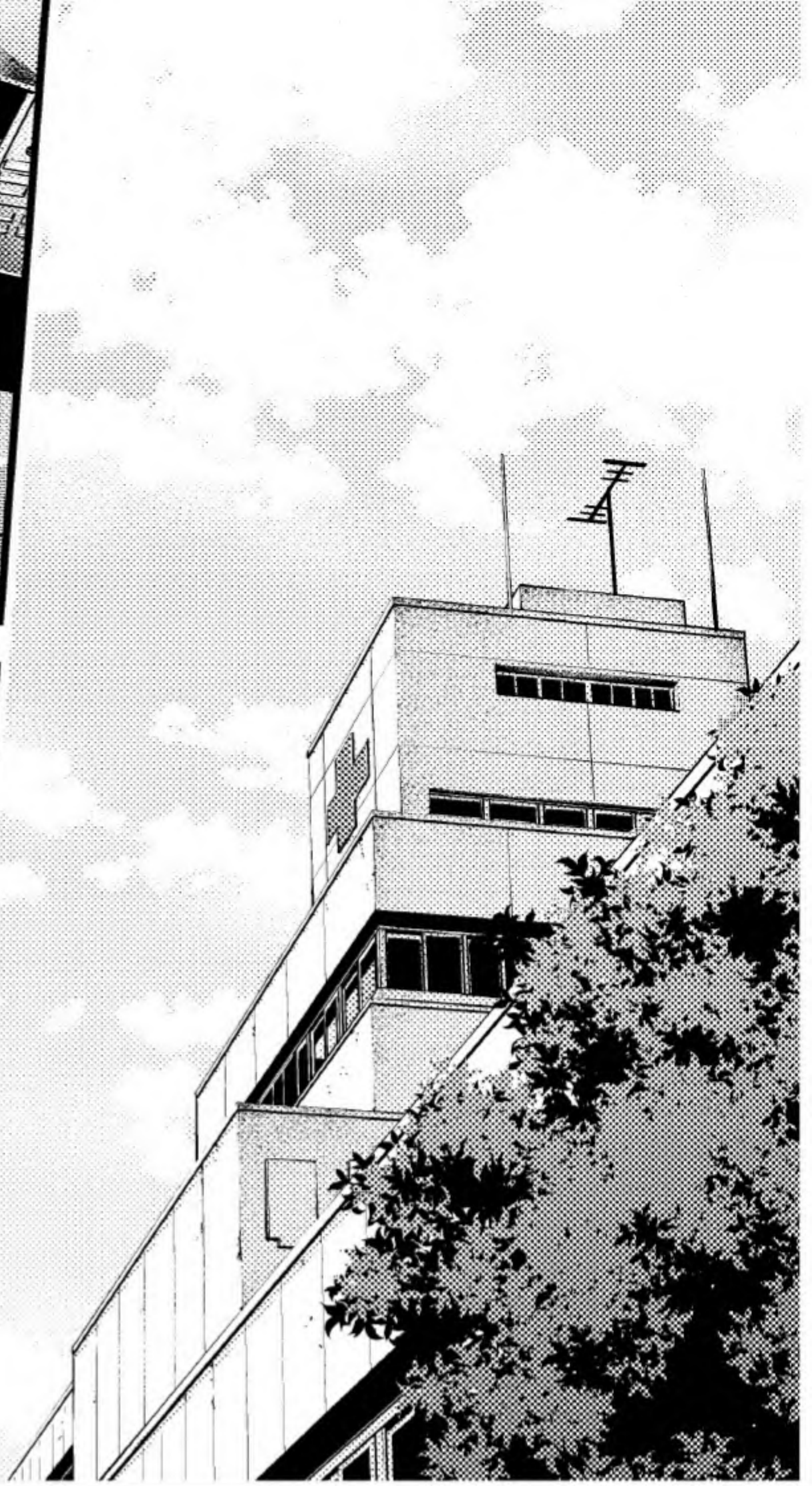
I'M SO GLAD WE GOT TO YOU BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE!



GUESS SO.

LOOKS LIKE THE DATE FOR THE SURGERY IS ALL SET, TOO.

ARE YOU SCARED?



THIS IS PAYBACK FOR ALL THE TIME I SPENT ON YOU!

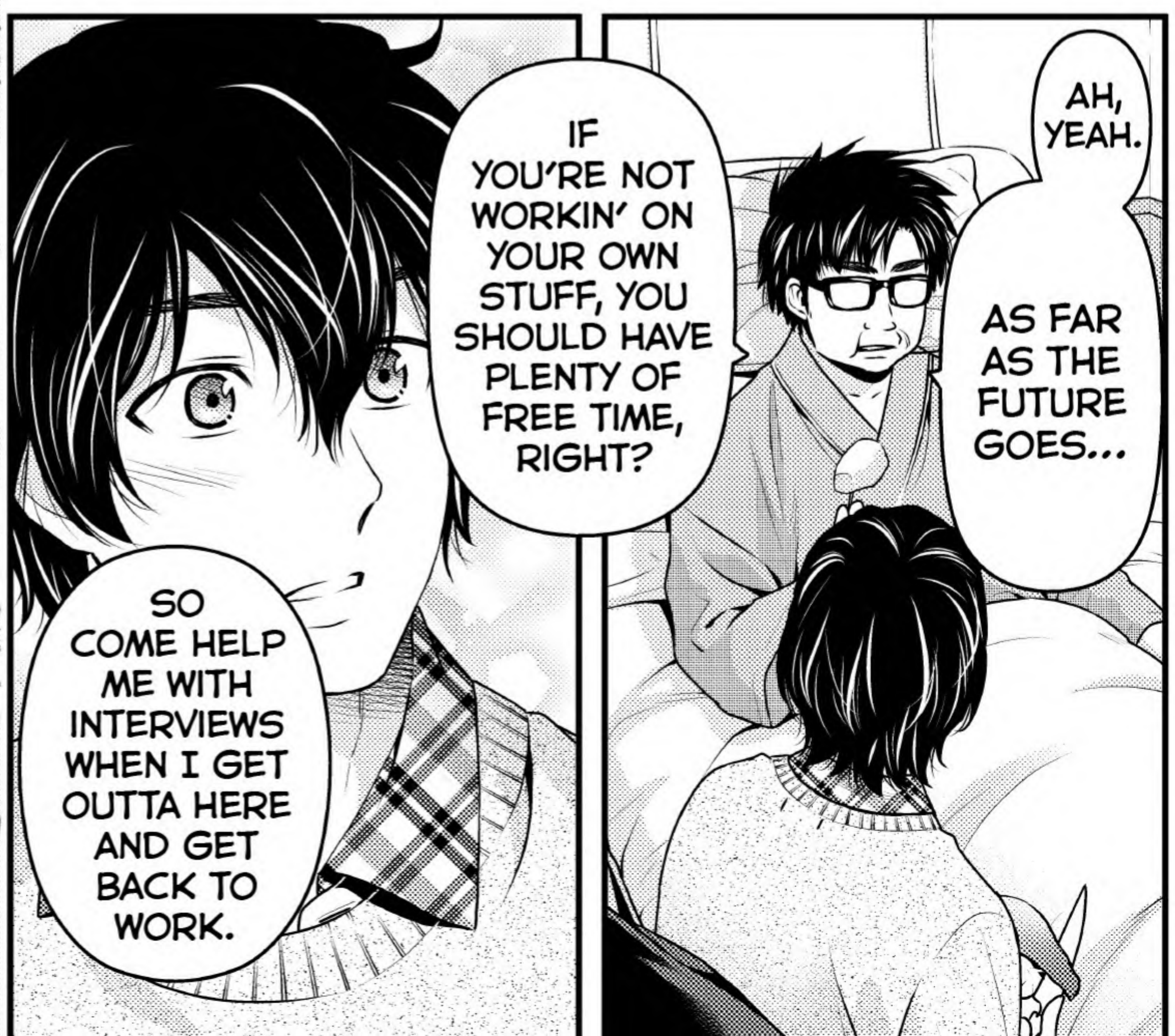
THIS AIN'T AN INTERVIEW!

SO HOW D'YA FEEL ABOUT BEING CUT OPEN SOON?

SCARED? WHADDYA THINK I AM, A KID?



OKAY!

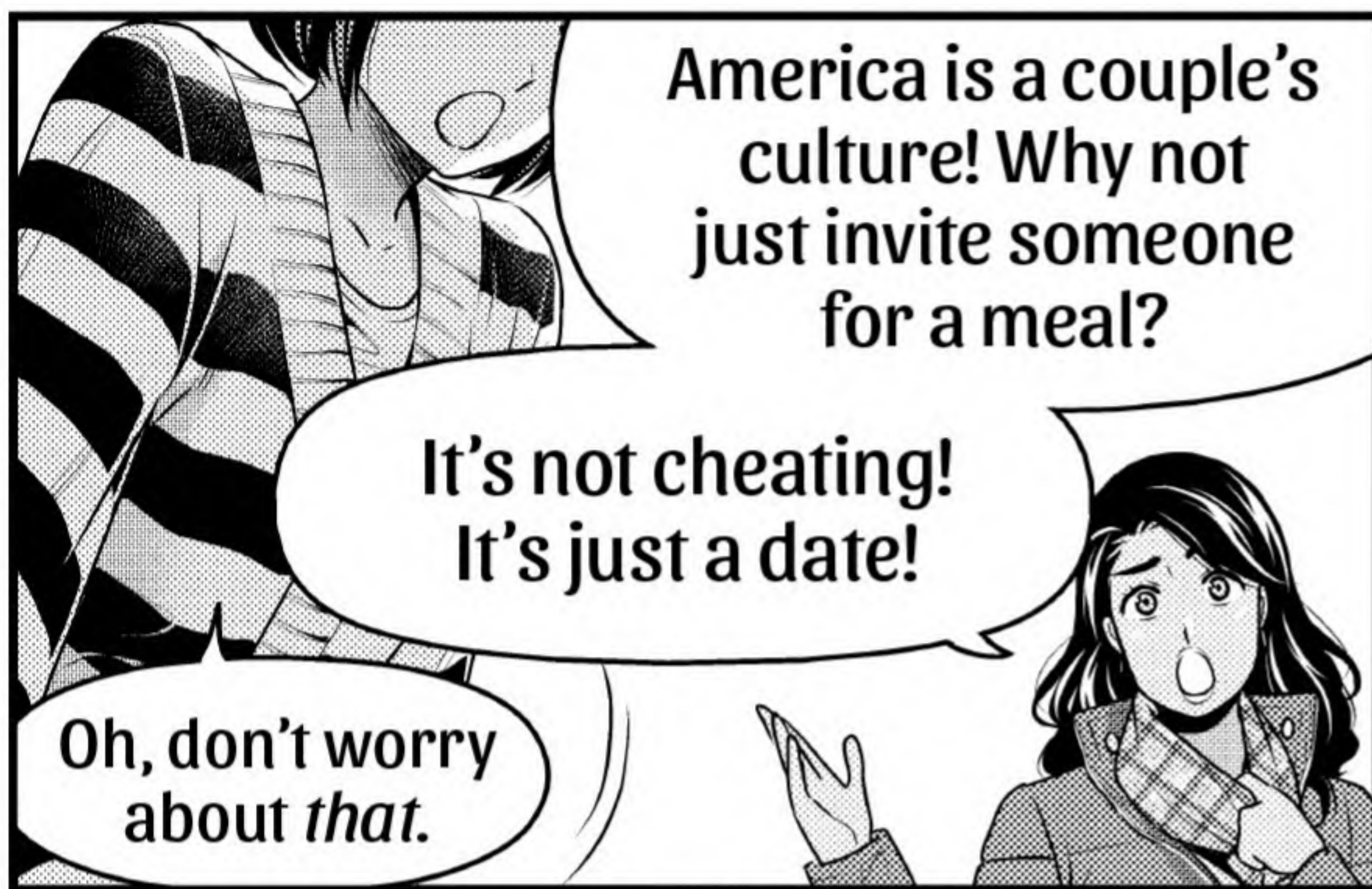
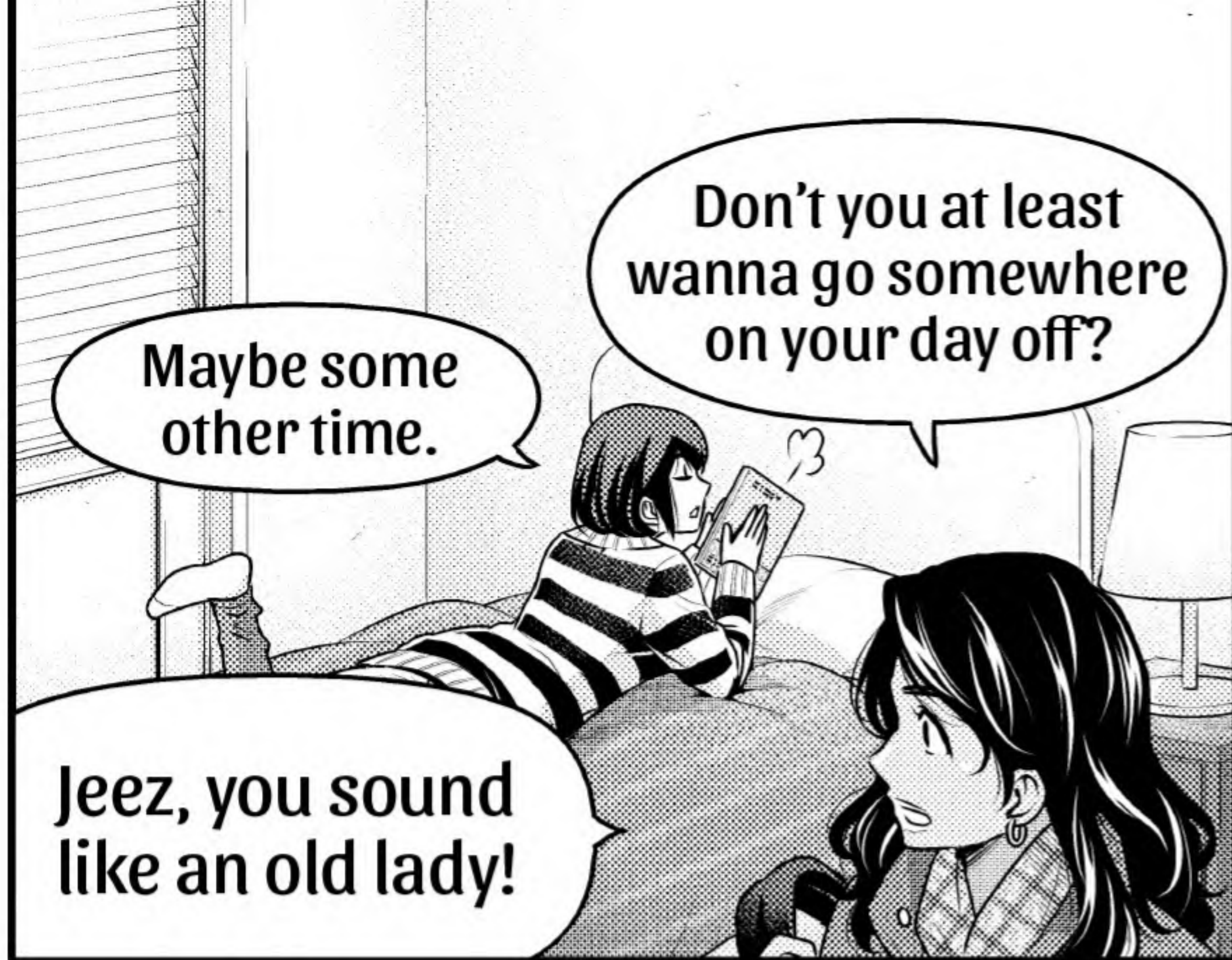


SO COME HELP ME WITH INTERVIEWS WHEN I GET OUTTA HERE AND GET BACK TO WORK.

IF YOU'RE NOT WORKIN' ON YOUR OWN STUFF, YOU SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF FREE TIME, RIGHT?

AH, YEAH.  
AS FAR AS THE FUTURE GOES...









## CHAPTER 213: A FAMILIAR FACE



THE  
DIFFERENCE IS,  
I MADE THE  
EFFORT TO  
STUDY!

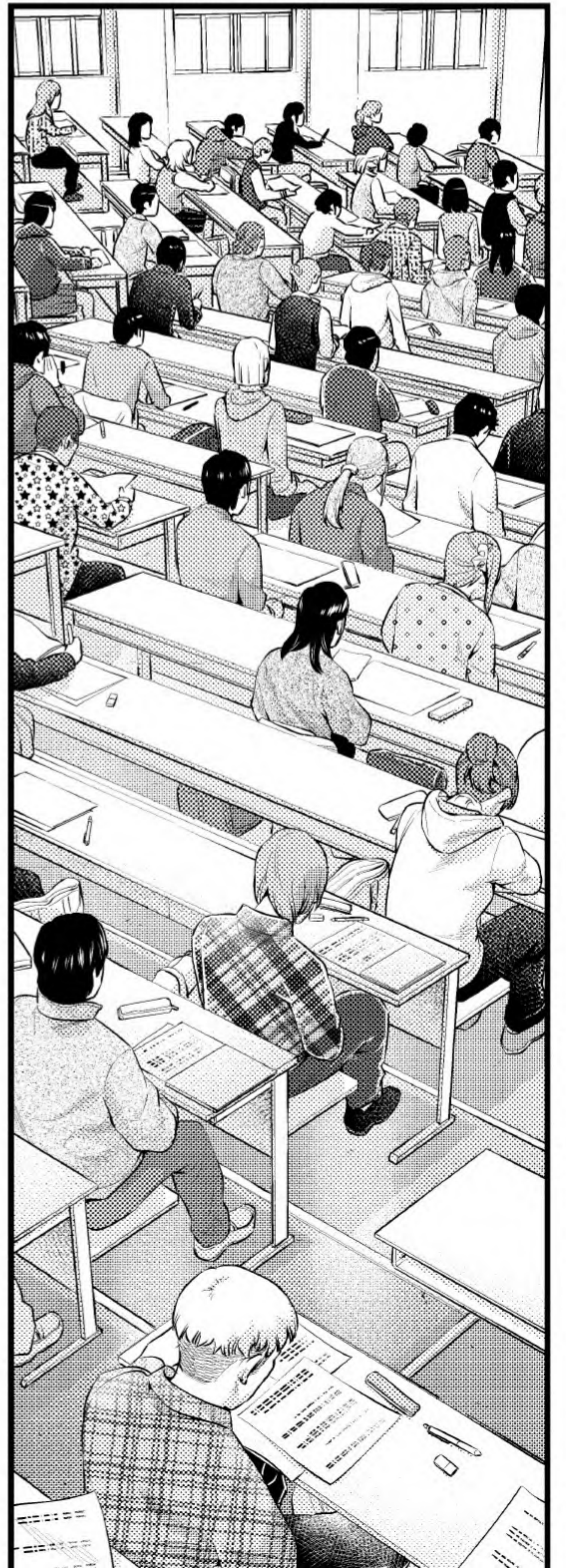
WHOA!  
WHILE  
HOLDING  
DOWN TWO  
JOBS?



WHY'RE  
YOU  
DRAGGING  
ME INTO  
THIS?!

LET'S JUST  
MAN UP AND  
DROP OUT  
ALREADY,  
FUJII!

BUT YOU'VE  
BEEN SO BUSY  
EVER SINCE  
THE START  
OF COLLEGE!  
YOU MUST'VE  
BOMBED THAT  
TEST!







WELL,  
FUJII'S  
MAKING  
MONEY  
FROM HIS  
BOOKS!



THAT'S NO  
EXCUSE!

...

DAMN...



IT'S NOT  
HIS FAULT  
YOU ALWAYS  
SLEEP  
THROUGH  
CLASSES!

DAMN  
IT!  
YOU  
TRAI-  
TOR!

THAT'S  
'CAUSE  
I'M UP AT  
THE CRACK  
OF DAWN  
STOCKING  
SHELVES!



AH.

IT'S  
ONLY  
ONE  
NOW.

I QUIT THE  
CAFÉ JOB.  
I'M JUST  
HELPING THE  
WRITER NOW.

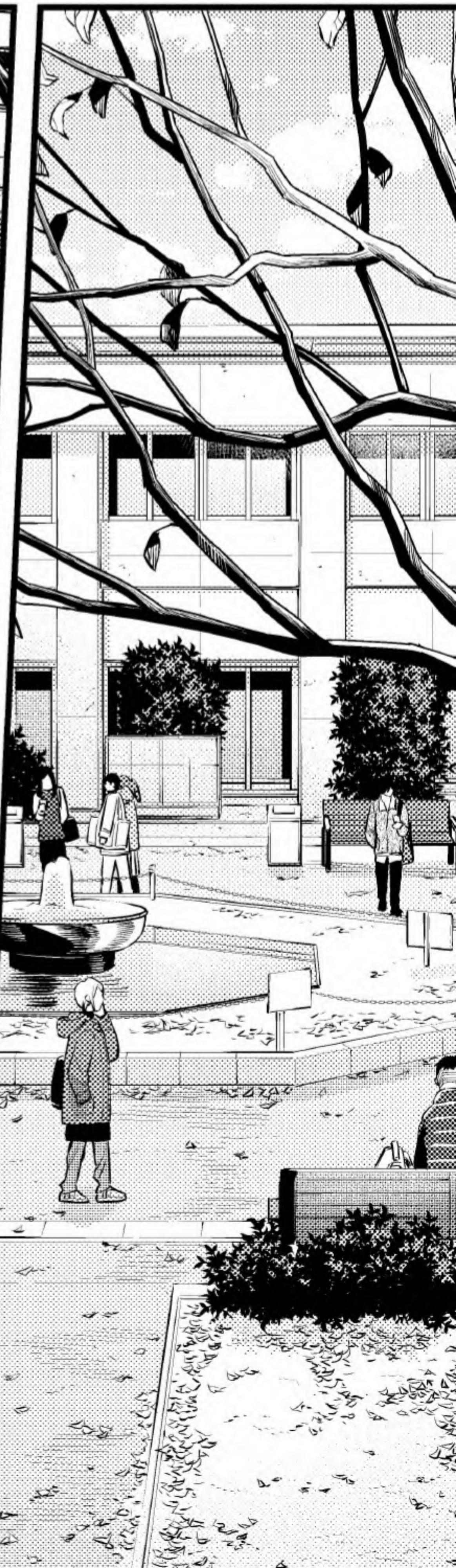
AHH.



TMP ㄝ  
TMP ㄝ  
?



FUJII-  
KUN.







ARE THINGS STILL THE SAME WITH YOUR WRITING?

SO...



PRETTY WELL, I THINK.

HOW'D THE TEST GO?

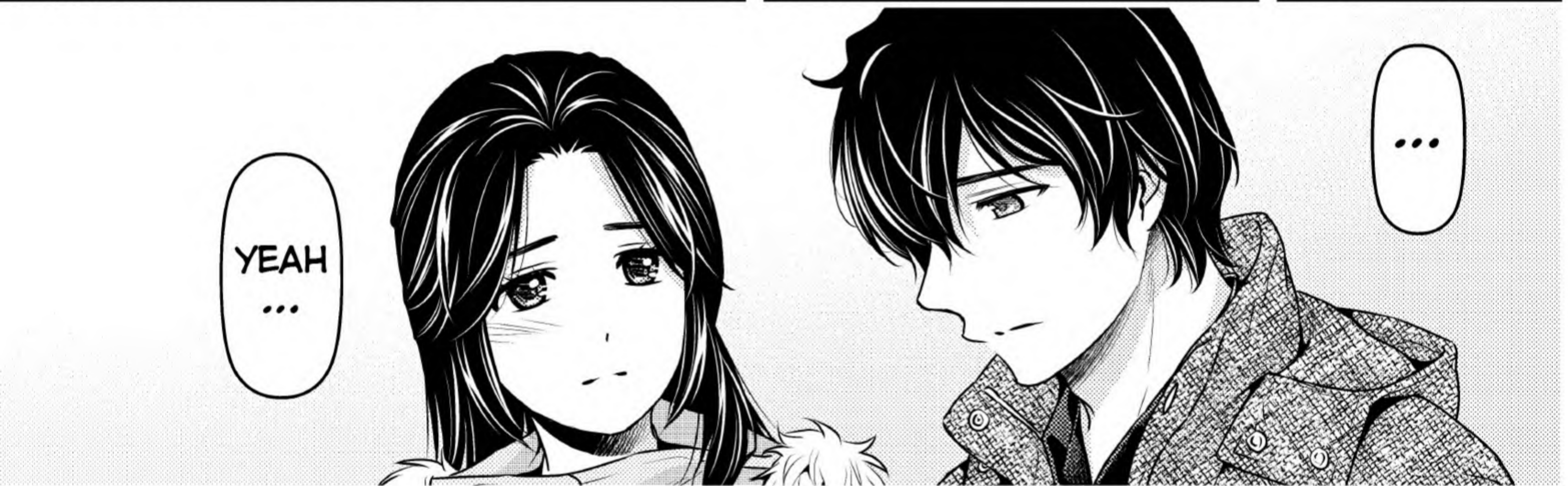
YOU'RE A REAL GOOD STUDENT, HUH?



CAN I SIT HERE?

OH...

SURE.



YEAH ...

...



I'M SCARED TO TELL HER.



YOUR GIRL-FRIEND, TOO...?

SO...

...

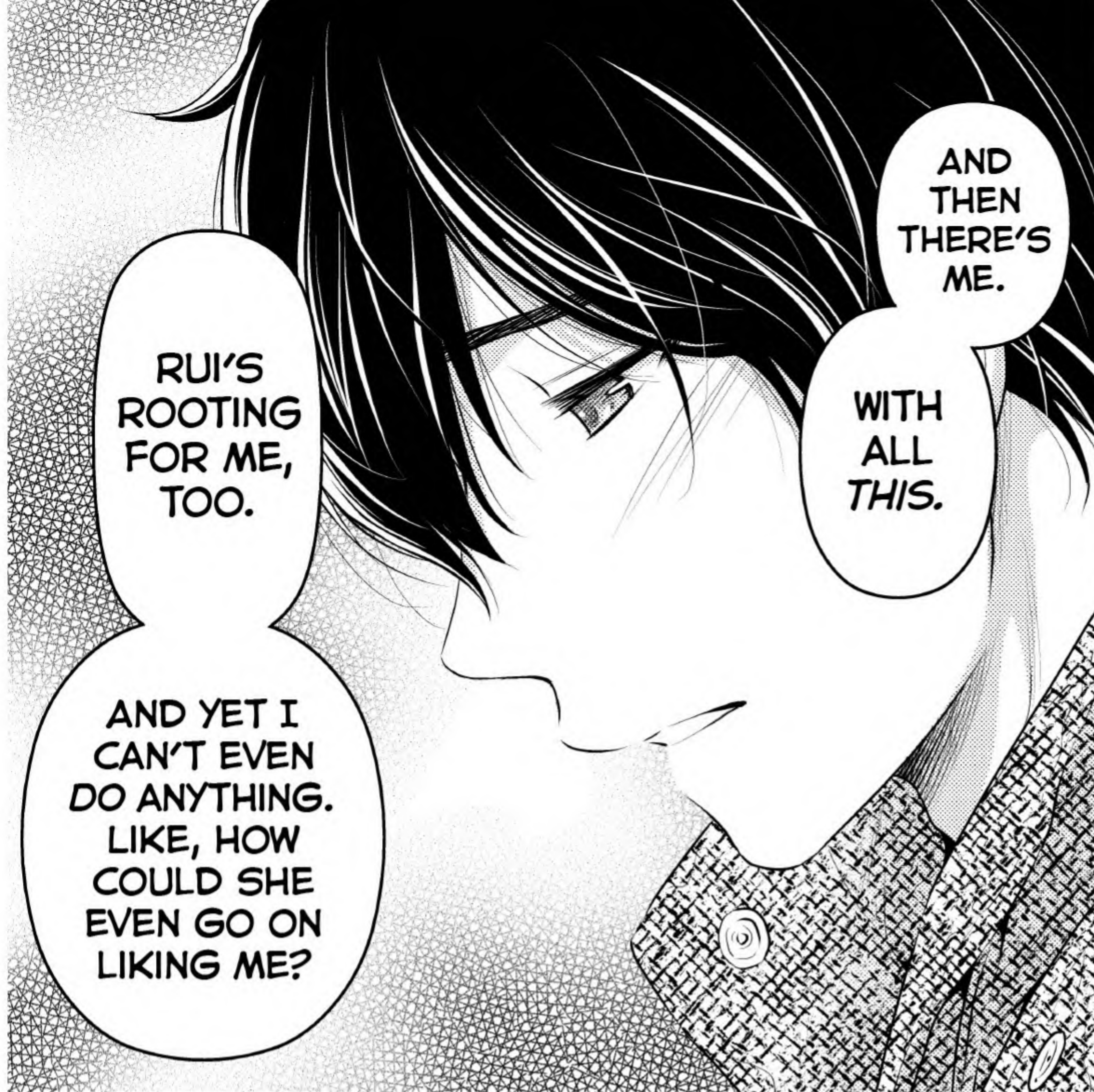


HE SAID IT'S BETTER TO HAVE ANOTHER PLACE TO HANG OUT.

I HAD A HEART-TO-HEART WITH NARA-SAN. I ENDED UP STAYING IN THE CLUB.

I STILL HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING TO MY FRIENDS FROM THE CLUB, THOUGH ...





RUI'S  
ROOTING  
FOR ME,  
TOO.

AND  
THEN  
THERE'S  
ME.

WITH  
ALL  
THIS.

AND YET I  
CAN'T EVEN  
DO ANYTHING.  
LIKE, HOW  
COULD SHE  
EVEN GO ON  
LIKING ME?



RUI'S  
REALLY  
GOING  
FOR IT  
WITH THESE  
COOKING  
CLASSES  
OVERSEAS.

MY GIRL-  
FRIEND'S  
...

SHE'S  
BEEN DOING  
GREAT  
LATELY.  
SHE TOLD  
ME SHE WON  
CHRISTMAS  
MVP.



SO I'M  
JUST  
GONNA  
WAIT  
AND—

YOU  
KNOW  
...



ANYTHING  
THAT'S  
BOTHERING  
YOU. THINGS  
YOU CAN'T  
TELL ANY-  
ONE ELSE.

I'M  
ALWAYS  
HERE FOR  
YOU.

...YOU  
CAN  
TALK  
TO ME,  
RIGHT ?

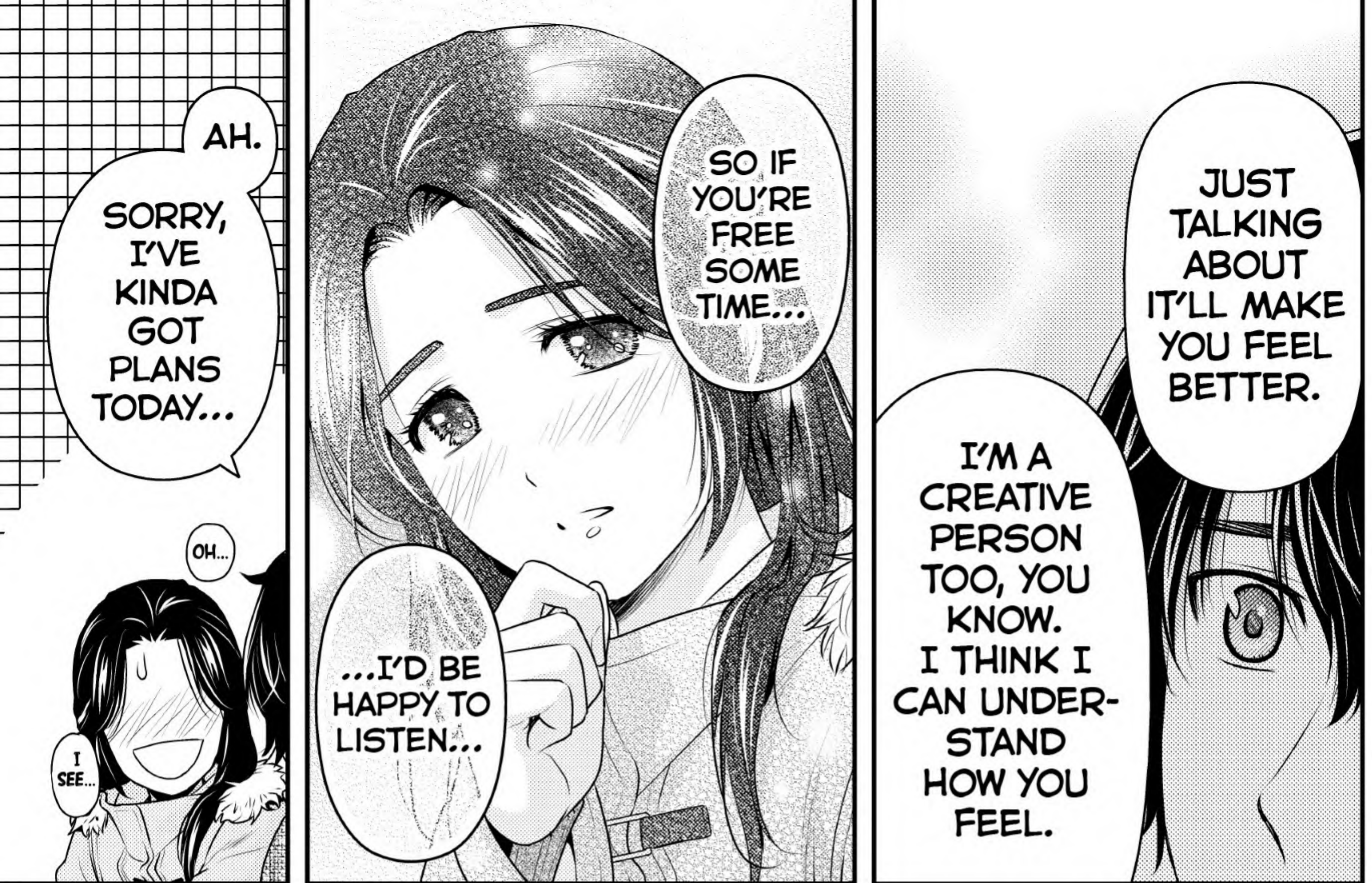
ABOUT  
ANY-  
THING.



I KNOW WE  
SHOULD BE  
SUPPORTING  
EACH OTHER.  
WE SHOULD BE  
ABLE TO TELL  
EACH OTHER  
ANYTHING.  
ESPECIALLY  
NOW.

BUT I  
DON'T  
WANT TO  
BURDEN  
HER WITH  
THIS.









YESTERDAY WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM IN TWO WEEKS! I WAS SOOO EXCITED!

I'VE BEEN AVOIDING SEEING RIKKUN, SO I CAN FOCUS ON STUDY-ING! I'VE BEEN SOOO LONELY!

TWO WHOLE WEEKS, HUH...

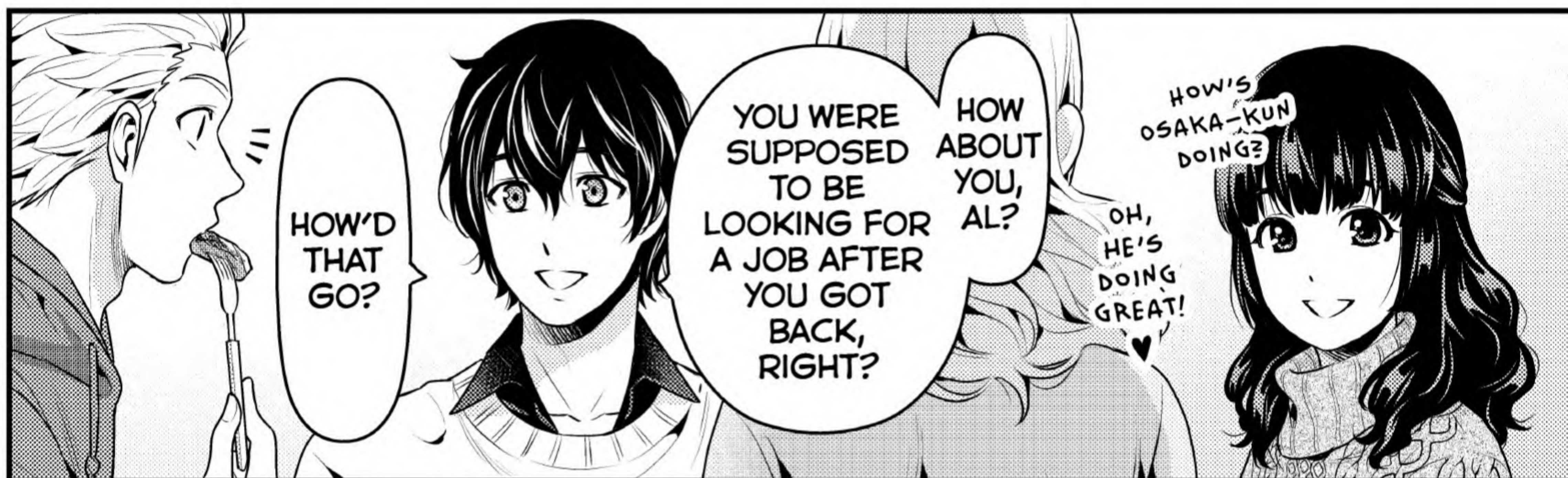


THAT'S RIIGHT!

SO YOU ALL HAVE YOUR TESTS AT PRETTY MUCH THE SAME TIME, HUH?

IS EVERYONE ON SPRING BREAK AFTER THAT?

I THINK I STILL HAVE ONE MORE CLASS.



HOW'D THAT GO?

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKING FOR A JOB AFTER YOU GOT BACK, RIGHT?

HOW ABOUT YOU, AL?

HOW'S OSAKA-KUN DOING?

OH, HE'S DOING GREAT!



N-NO... NOTH-ING, BUT...

ANYTHING HAPPENED WITH KIRIYA-SENSEI?

HOW 'BOUT YOU, MYU-CHAN?



HUH?! A GUY ?!

I MADE FRIENDS WITH THIS PERSON FROM A PUBLISHER THAT COMES INTO THE BOOKSTORE I WORK AT...



W H O A !

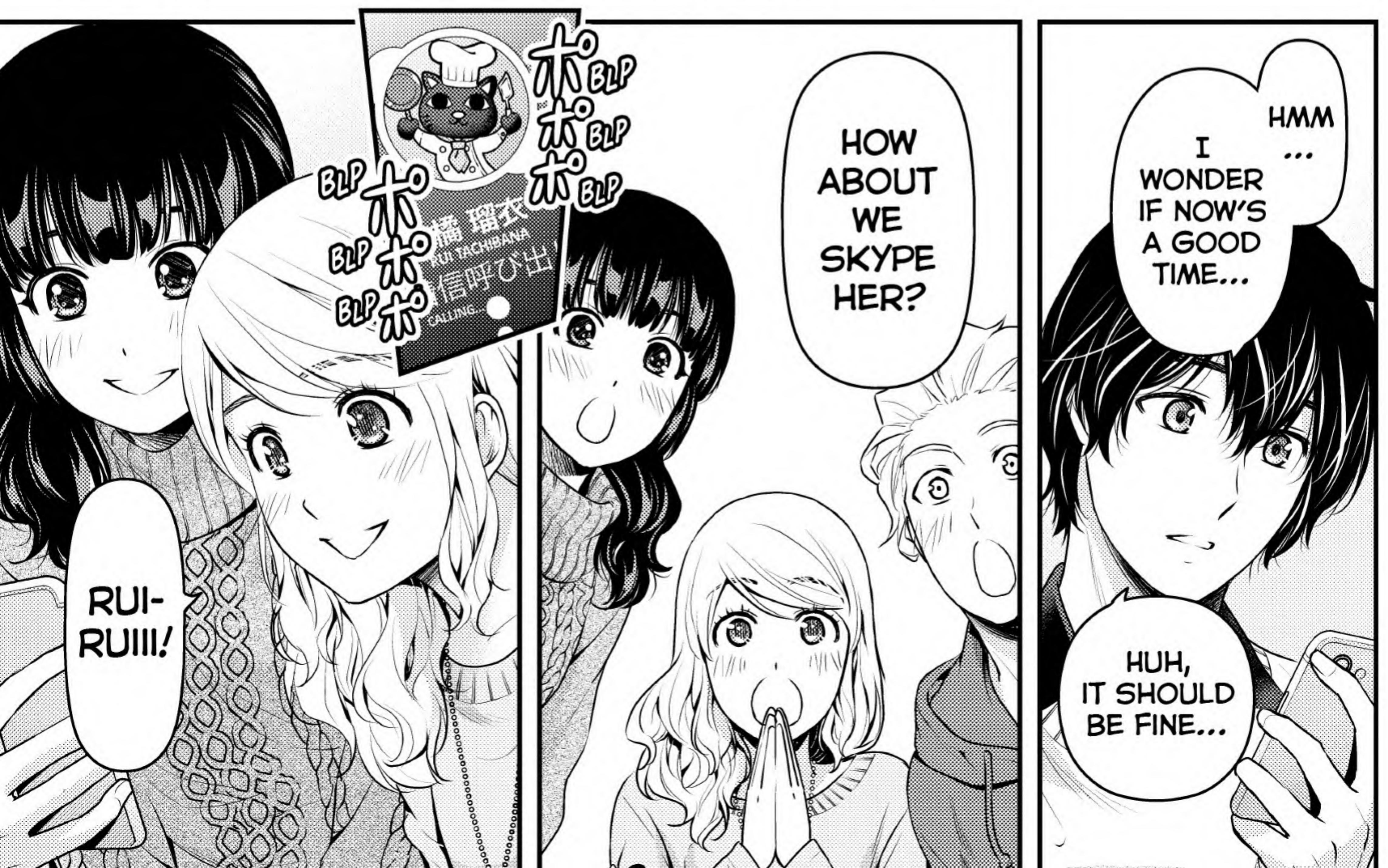
I BET KIDS JUST LOVE YOU!

IT'S A BLAST!

I'M TEACHING A KIDS' ENGLISH CONVERSA-TION CLASS!

YEAH! I FOUND ONE PRETTY FAST.









RUI-CHAN!

HOW ARE YOU?  
GOTTEN THE HANG OF ENGLISH?

YEAH, A LITTLE.

AHHH!  
RUI-  
RUIII!



OH!

EVERY-  
ONE'S  
THERE!

I'VE  
MISSED  
YOU!  
HOW ARE  
YOU ALL?

HEY!



HEY!  
DON'T  
YOU  
ALREADY  
HAVE  
LILY?

REAL-  
LY?

HEY, YOU  
REALLY  
WON'T GO  
OUT WITH  
ME?



How's it going  
over there?

I'm doing  
well so far.

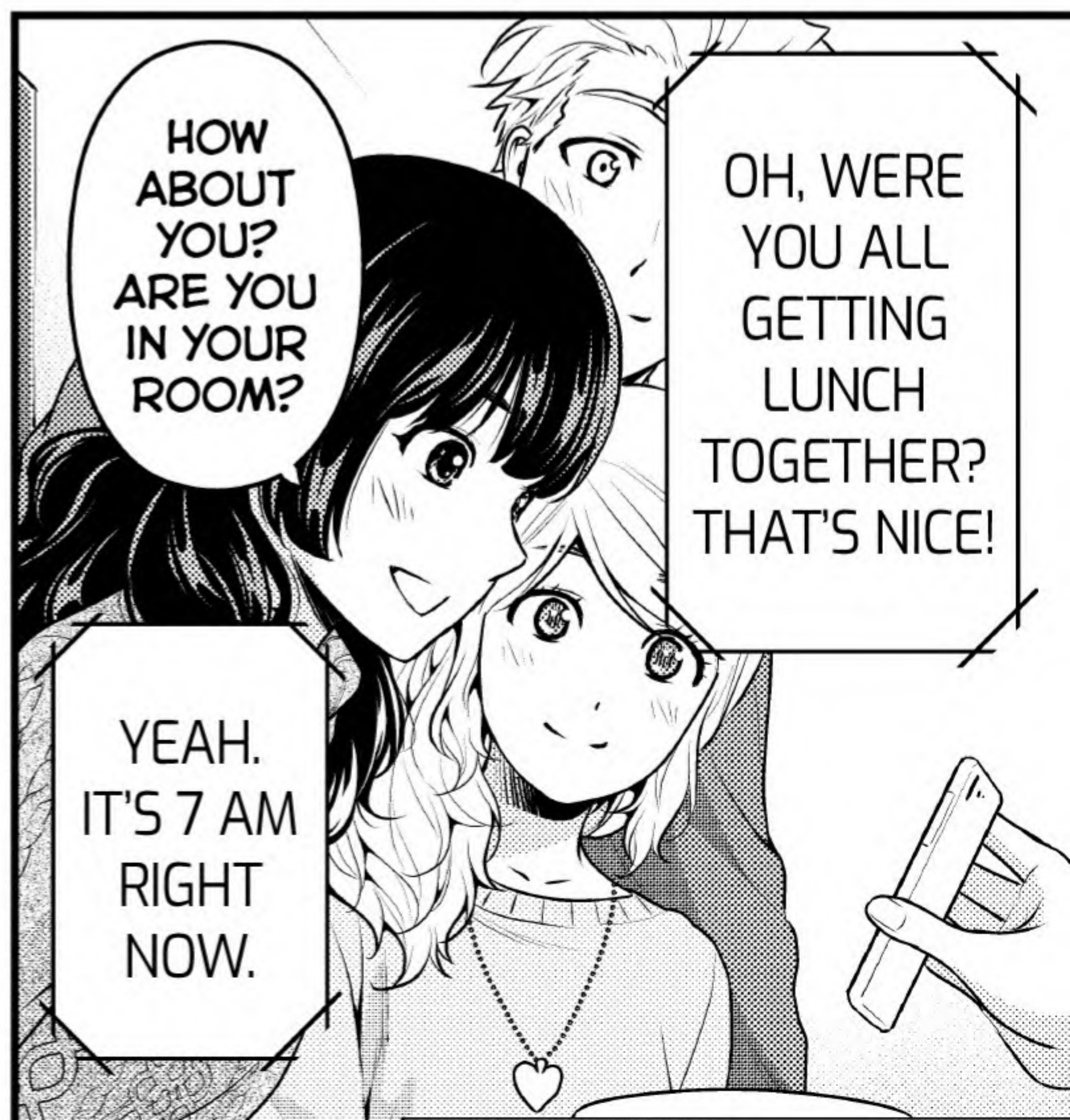
おー  
WHOA!



Hey! I'm making bac—  
Oh, are you Skyping with  
your boyfriend?

Well, with  
my friends...

Your  
friends?!  
Japanese  
friends?!



HOW  
ABOUT  
YOU?  
ARE YOU  
IN YOUR  
ROOM?

OH, WERE  
YOU ALL  
GETTING  
LUNCH  
TOGETHER?  
THAT'S NICE!

YEAH.  
IT'S 7 AM  
RIGHT  
NOW.





ARE YOU  
RUI-RUI'S  
FRIEND?

WOW!  
SHE'S  
GOR-  
GEOUS!

YEAH!  
I'M HER  
ROOM-  
MATE!



Hey guys!  
How are you?!

I'm Daniella!



INTER-  
PRET  
FOR US,  
AL!

That's right!  
Oh! Are you  
from here?

Are you teaching  
Rui-chan English?



Guess  
what?

?

This is just  
between you  
and me...



Is Rui making  
friends over  
there?

Yeah, she's doing  
well, I think!

Oh! That's right!



I'm talking now,  
Rui! Go watch the  
frying pan!

Huh?!

You're frying?!





Seriously?!



...but, Rui's going on a date!



...GOING ON A DATE...

SHE SAID RUI-CHAN'S ...



HEY, AL! WHAT WAS THAT?

Oh! Looks like breakfast's ready!

See ya!

PWP  
PWP



THIS CALLS FOR AN EMERGENCY MEETING!



A DATE?! WITH WHO?!

SOME-ONE OVER THERE?!

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?! WHY?!



WHAAT!



# 朝まで生談義

チャ— DAHH

チャ— DAHH

DAHH

DAHH

DAHH

DAHH

徹底討論

THOROUGHLY DEBATING

デート問題

"THE DATE QUESTION"



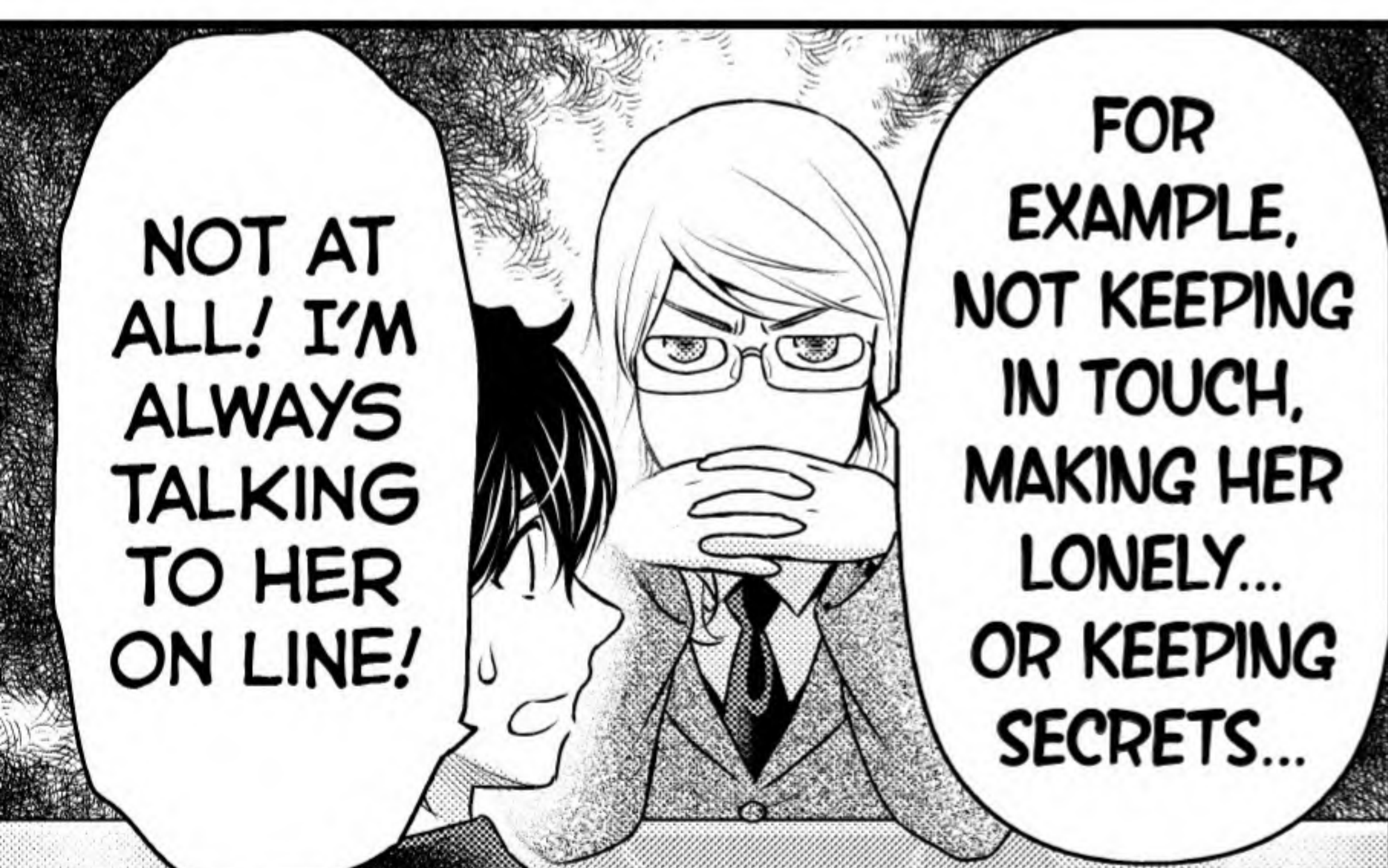
BUT...  
WOULD  
TACHIBANA-  
SAN REALLY  
CHANGE  
THAT  
EASILY?



WELL,  
ONE'S  
ENVIRON-  
MENT CAN  
CHANGE A  
PERSON.

SURELY  
THAT'S  
WAY TOO  
SOON  
FOR HER  
HEART TO  
BE WAN-  
DERING?

IT'S ONLY  
BEEN HALF A  
YEAR SINCE  
SHE MOVED  
AWAY,  
RIGHT?



NOT AT  
ALL! I'M  
ALWAYS  
TALKING  
TO HER  
ON LINE!

FOR  
EXAMPLE,  
NOT KEEPING  
IN TOUCH,  
MAKING HER  
LONELY...  
OR KEEPING  
SECRETS...



YOU  
MUST  
HAVE A  
GOOD  
REASON  
FOR THIS,  
RIGHT?!

POINT

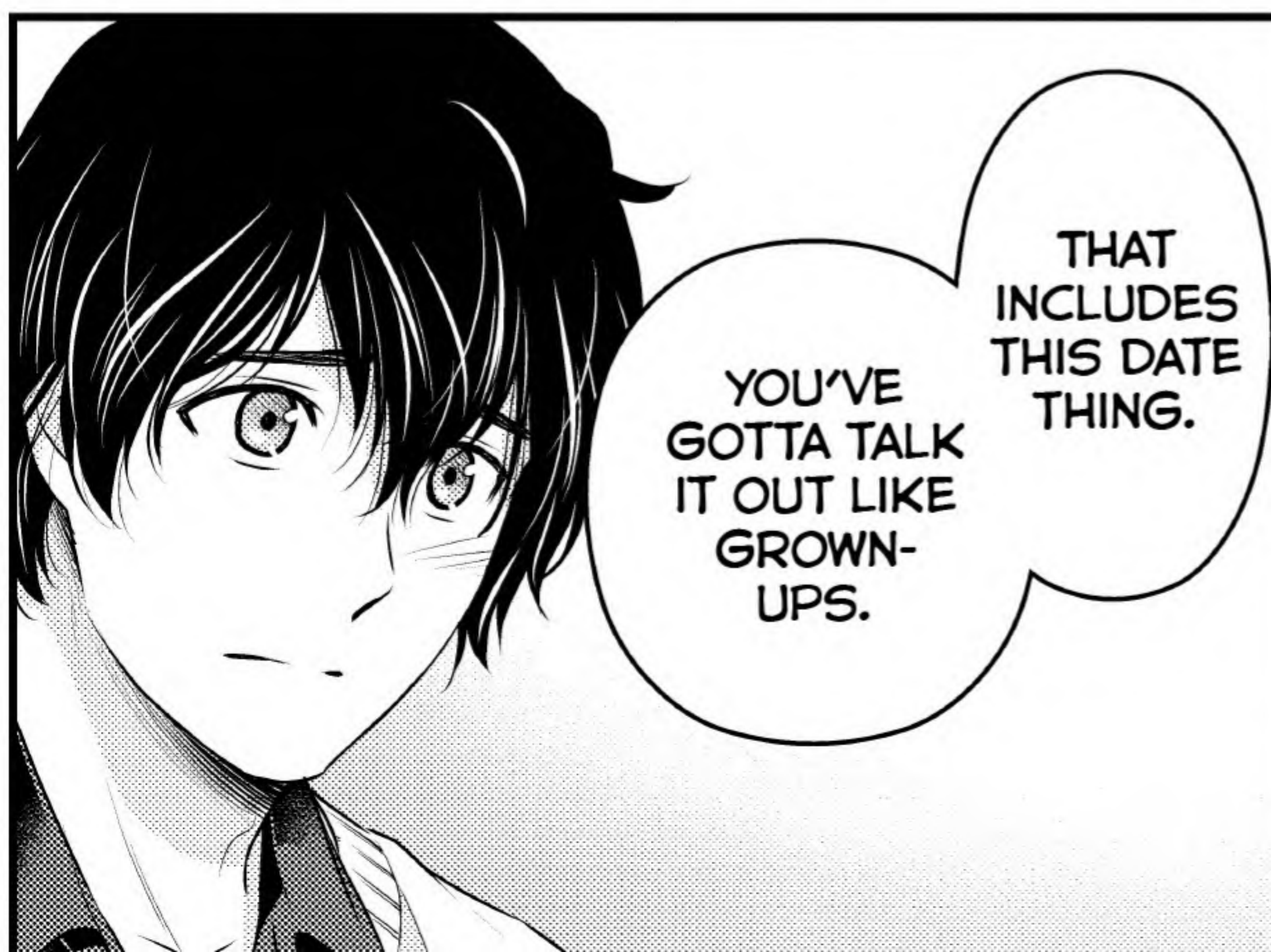
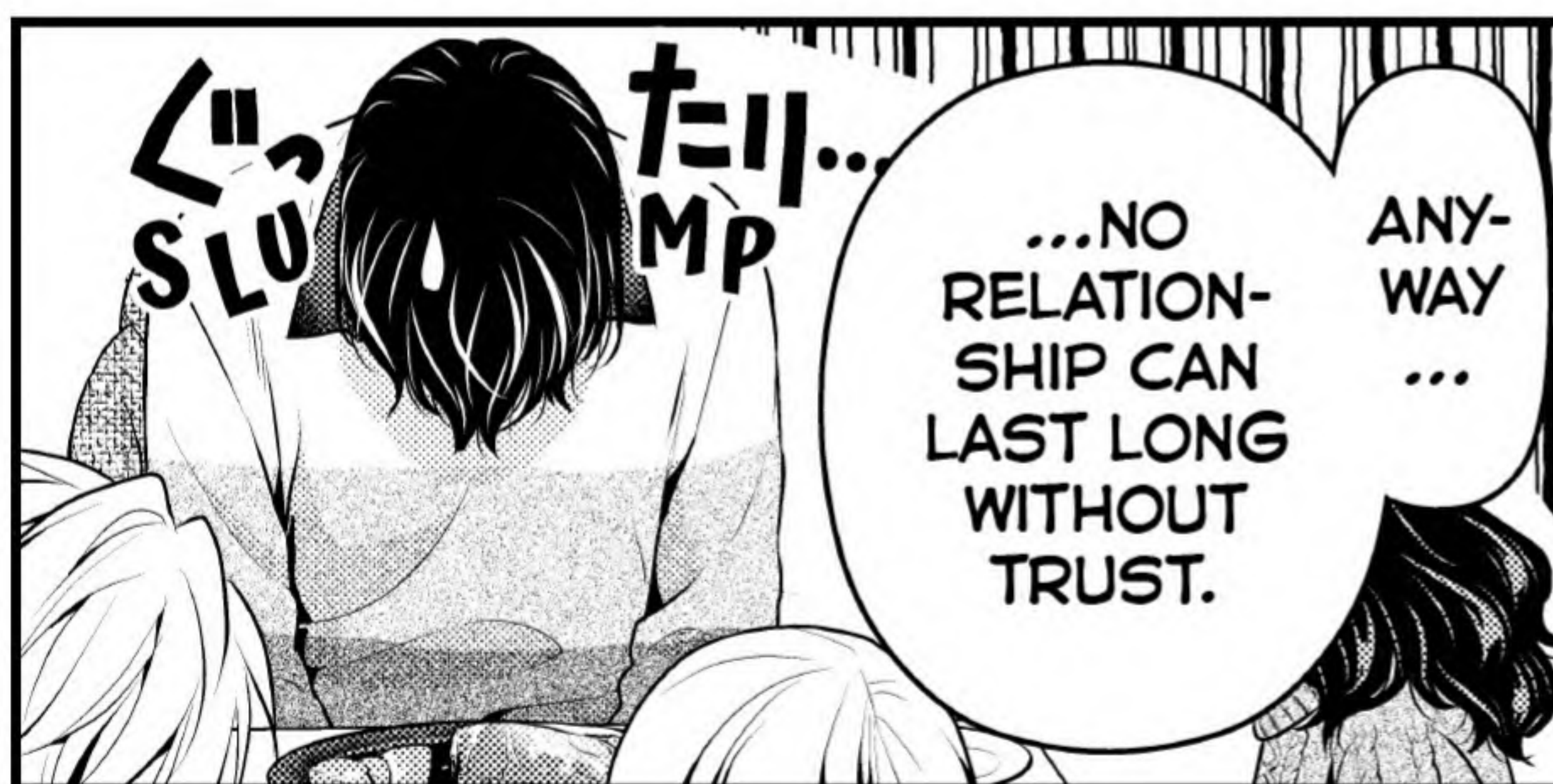
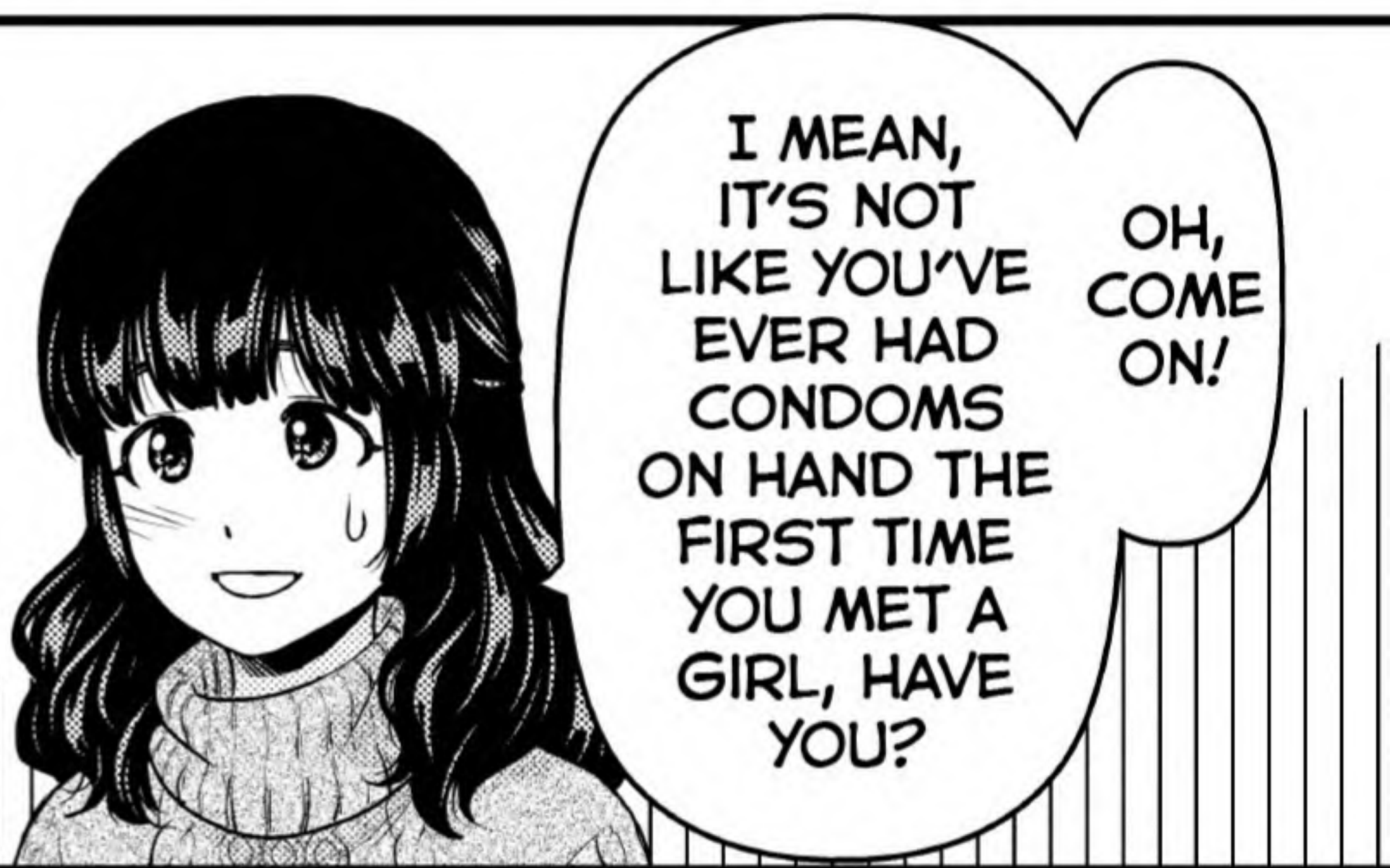
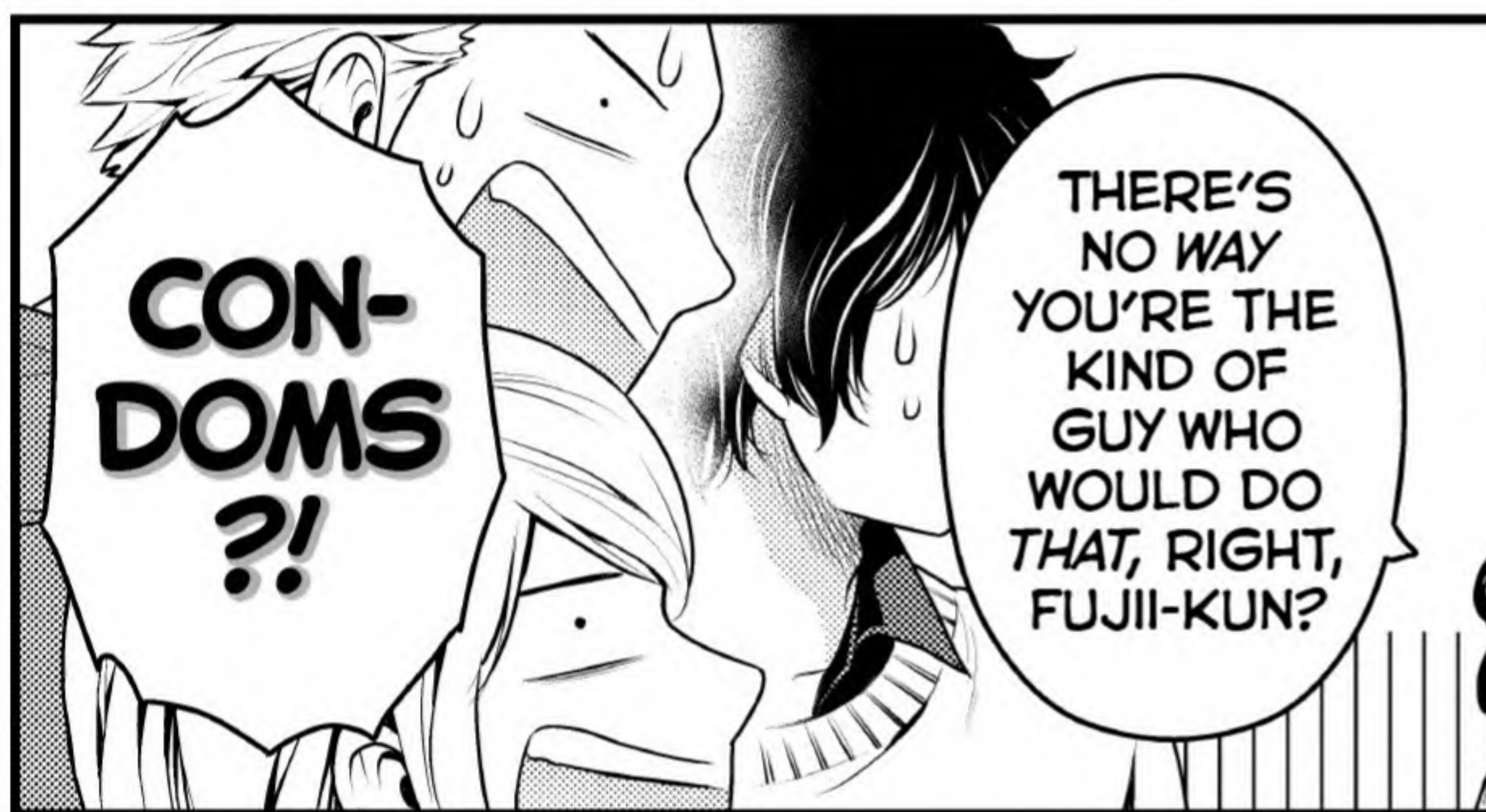
ME  
?!



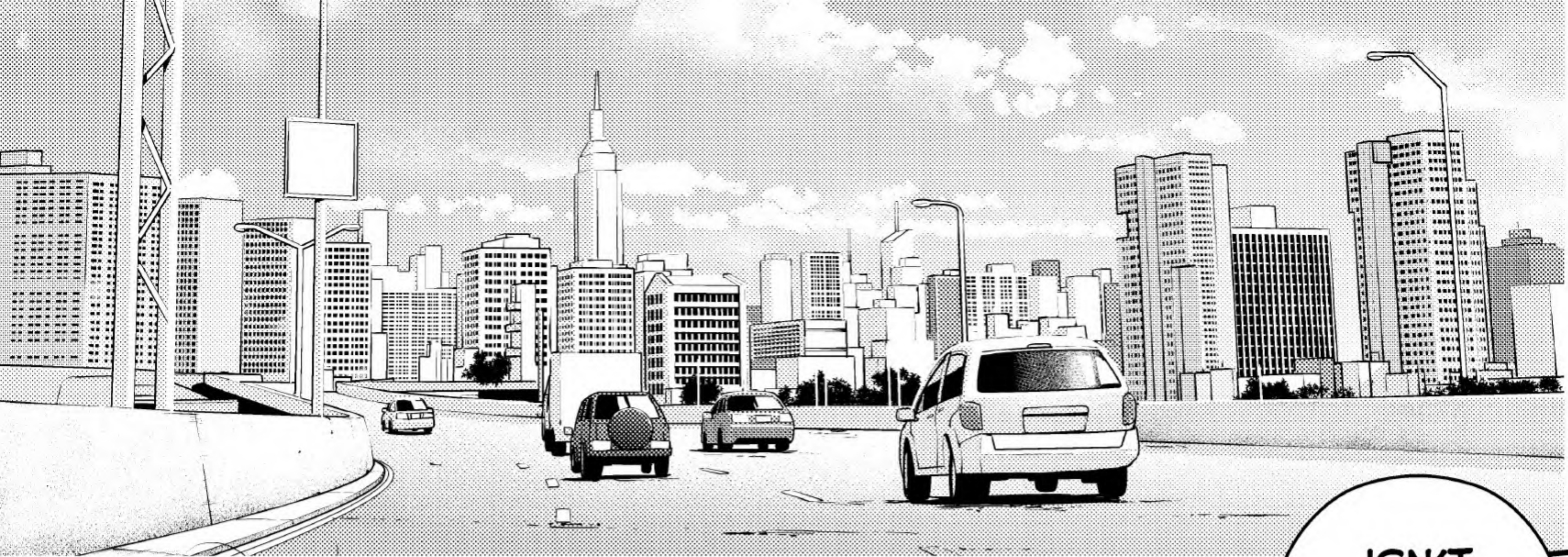
YOUR  
GIRL-  
FRIEND,  
TOO...?

AS FOR  
SECRETS  
...









I'M SORRY.

I KNOW IT'S YOUR DAY OFF, TOO.



IT'S OKAY.

NO PROBLEM.



I BETTER BE CAREFUL NOT TO CRASH

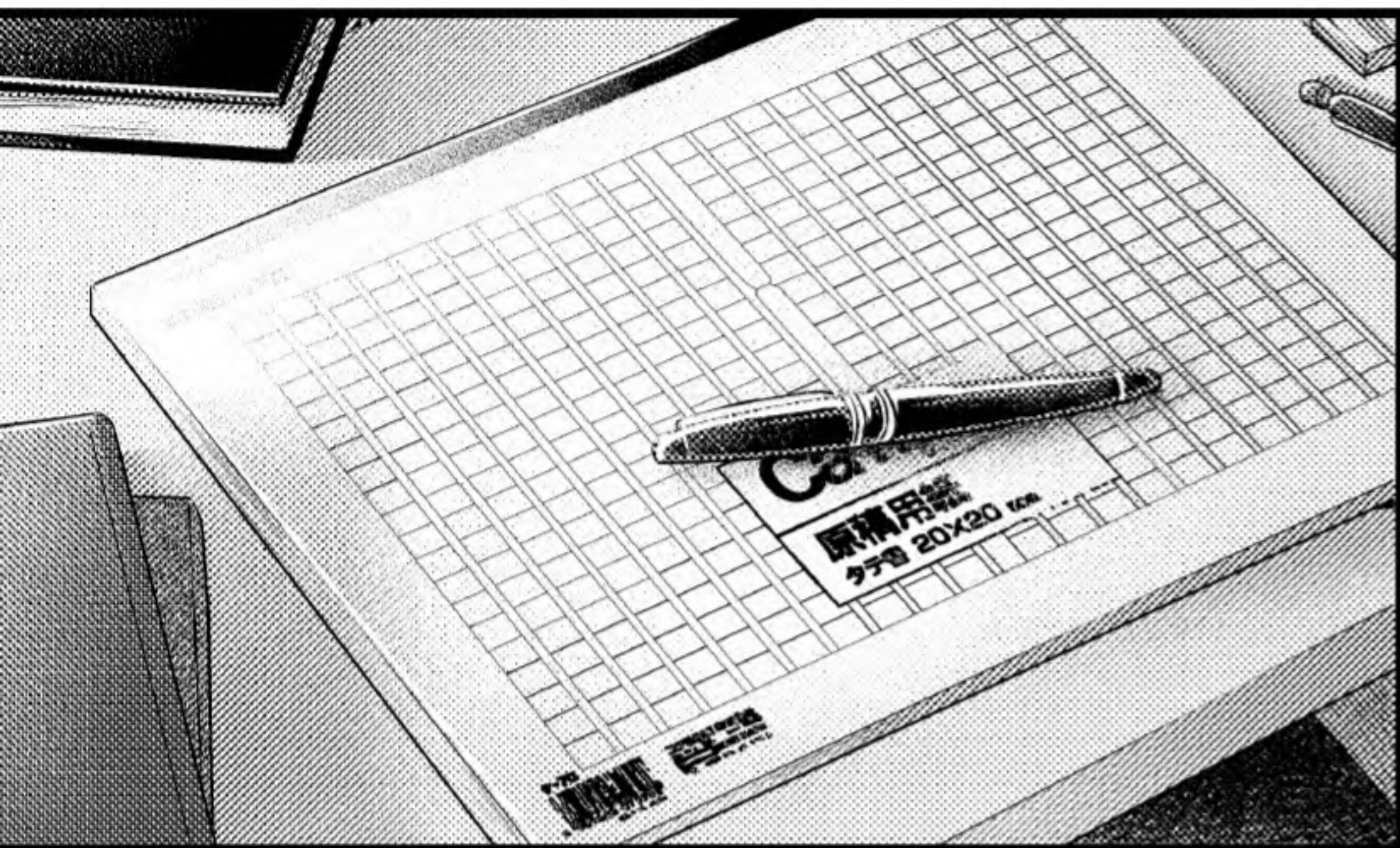
ISN'T WILL-SAN'S BIKE INCREDIBLE ?

























CHAPTER 214: I'M HOME!







AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO PINCH YOUR OWN CHEEKS TO CHECK IF YOU'RE DREAMING?

HIGHT!  
HIGHT!

HAIM  
HORRY!



YOU MEAN THIS ISN'T A DREAM? AN ILLUSION?!

SO  
SOFT  
...

YOU'RE  
REALLY  
HERE!

もに  
PINCH

PINCH もに

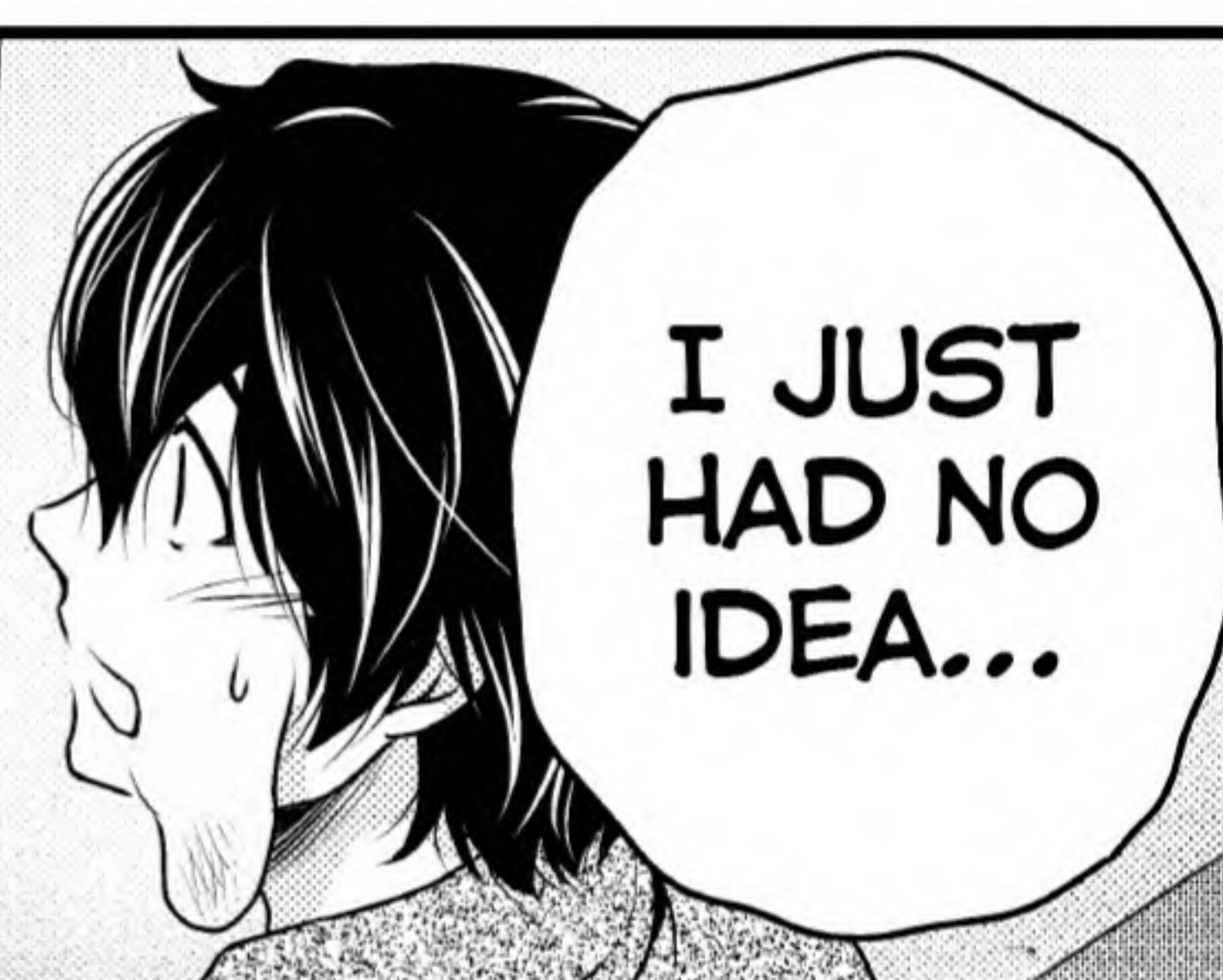
もに  
PINCH



I GOT FIVE DAYS OFF, SO I CAME HOME!



THINGS HAVE CALMED DOWN SINCE THE NEW YEAR'S BUSY PERIOD.



I JUST HAD NO IDEA...



YOU MES-  
SAGED  
ME?

OH!

SORRY! I FORGOT TO TURN OFF AIRPLANE MODE.

BUT  
...

...YOU HADN'T EVEN READ MY MESSAGE ...



I DON'T THINK ANYONE ELSE IS GOING HOME. IT'S NOT A LONG BREAK, AFTER ALL. BUT I REALLY WANTED TO SEE YOU!



THAT'S RIGHT.

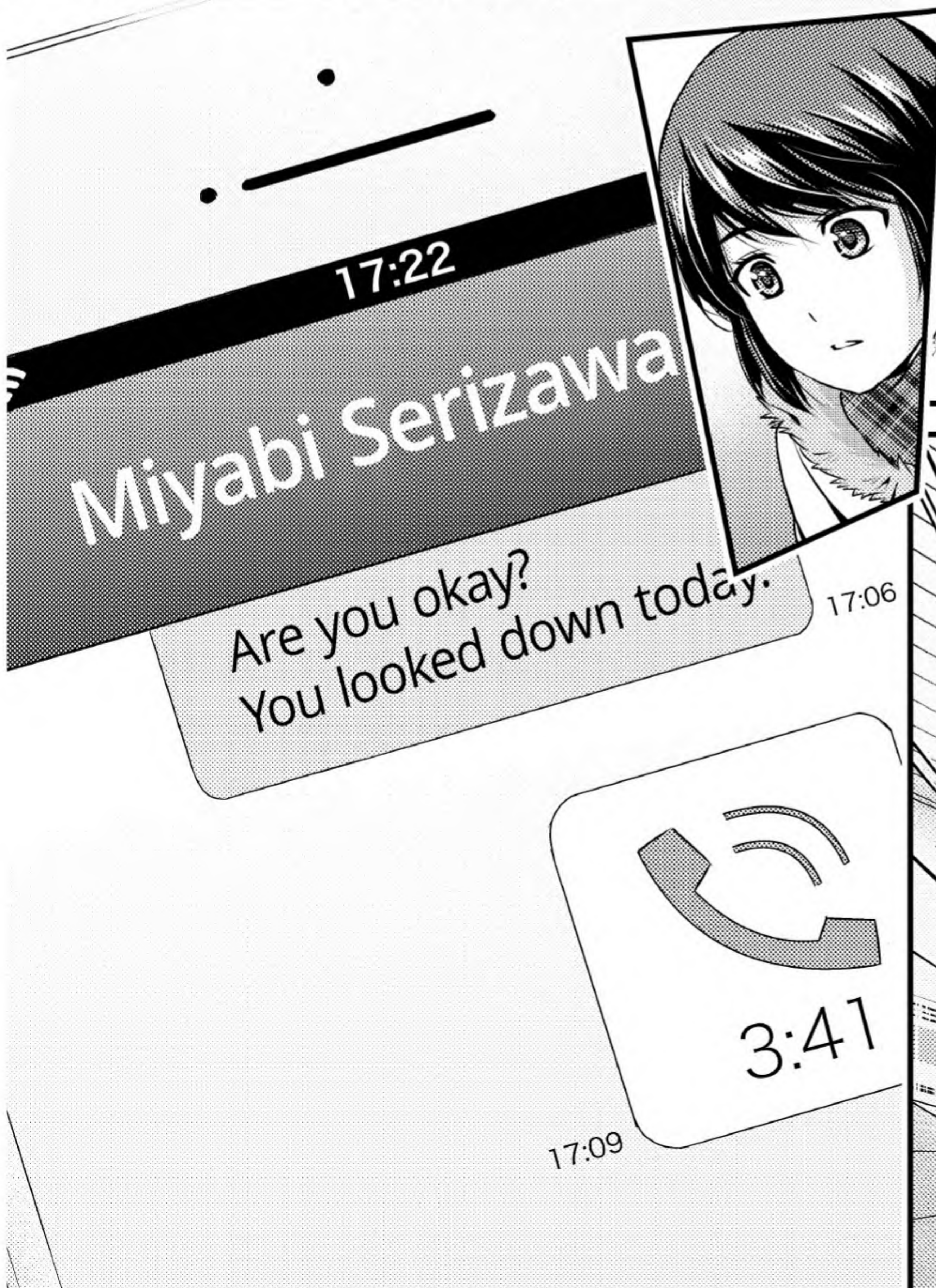
I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHO YOU WERE GOING ON A DATE WITH...

I WENT AND GOT SOME INGREDIENTS FROM THE GROCERY STORE, SO I CAN TREAT YOU TO EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED OVER THERE!













I JUST WANTED TO ASK HER SOMETHING.



I MEAN ...

I NEEDED ADVICE.



HUH ...

IT WAS SERIZAWA-SAN YOU HAD PLANS WITH?

WERE YOU GOING TO MEET UP?



I HAD NO IDEA.

YOU WERE REALLY THAT UPSET?

WHAT ? ADVICE ?



I TOLD YOU NOT TO LET HER TEMPT YOU!

YOU HAD HER OVER HERE BEFORE, AFTER ALL!

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?



I DON'T FEEL GUILTY. I JUST KNEW IT WOULD MAKE YOU SUSPICIOUS ...

DAMN RIGHT, IT DOES!

WHAT CAN YOU TELL HER THAT YOU CAN'T TELL ME?

GOT A GUILTY CONSCIENCE OR SOMETHING? WHY D'YOU HAVE TO HIDE IT?





WASN'T  
HE OVER  
AT YOUR  
PLACE  
?!



...I  
NEVER  
ACCUSED  
YOU, DID  
I?

HONESTLY,  
AFTER I  
SAW HIM  
ON SKYPE,  
I STARTED  
TO GET  
JEALOUS,  
BUT...



AND  
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
GOING ON  
HERE,  
EITHER!

THERE'S  
NOTHING  
GOING ON  
BETWEEN  
HE AND I.

HUH?  
  
YOU  
MEAN  
KAJITA  
?



...I  
...  
  
...UGH,  
GOD,  
WHAT-  
EVER!



AFTER  
...  
  
...I CAME  
BACK  
HERE TO  
MAKE YOU  
HAPPY...

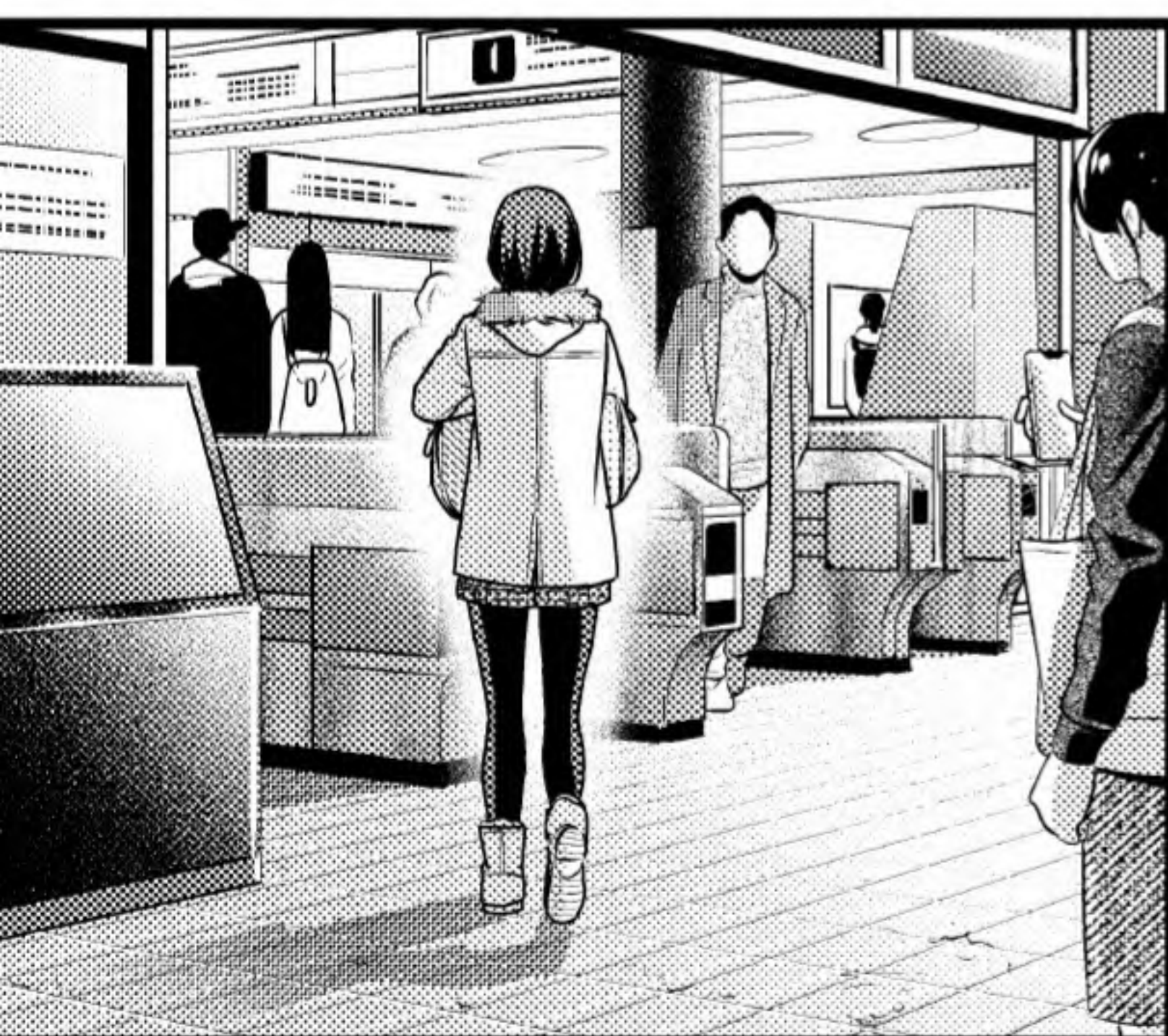


THEN WHAT?  
"I NEVER  
COMPLAINED,  
SO YOU  
BETTER NOT  
COMPLAIN  
EITHER"?!  
  
"WE'RE  
FRIENDS,  
SO LET US  
HANG OUT  
ALONE  
TOGETHER"  
?!

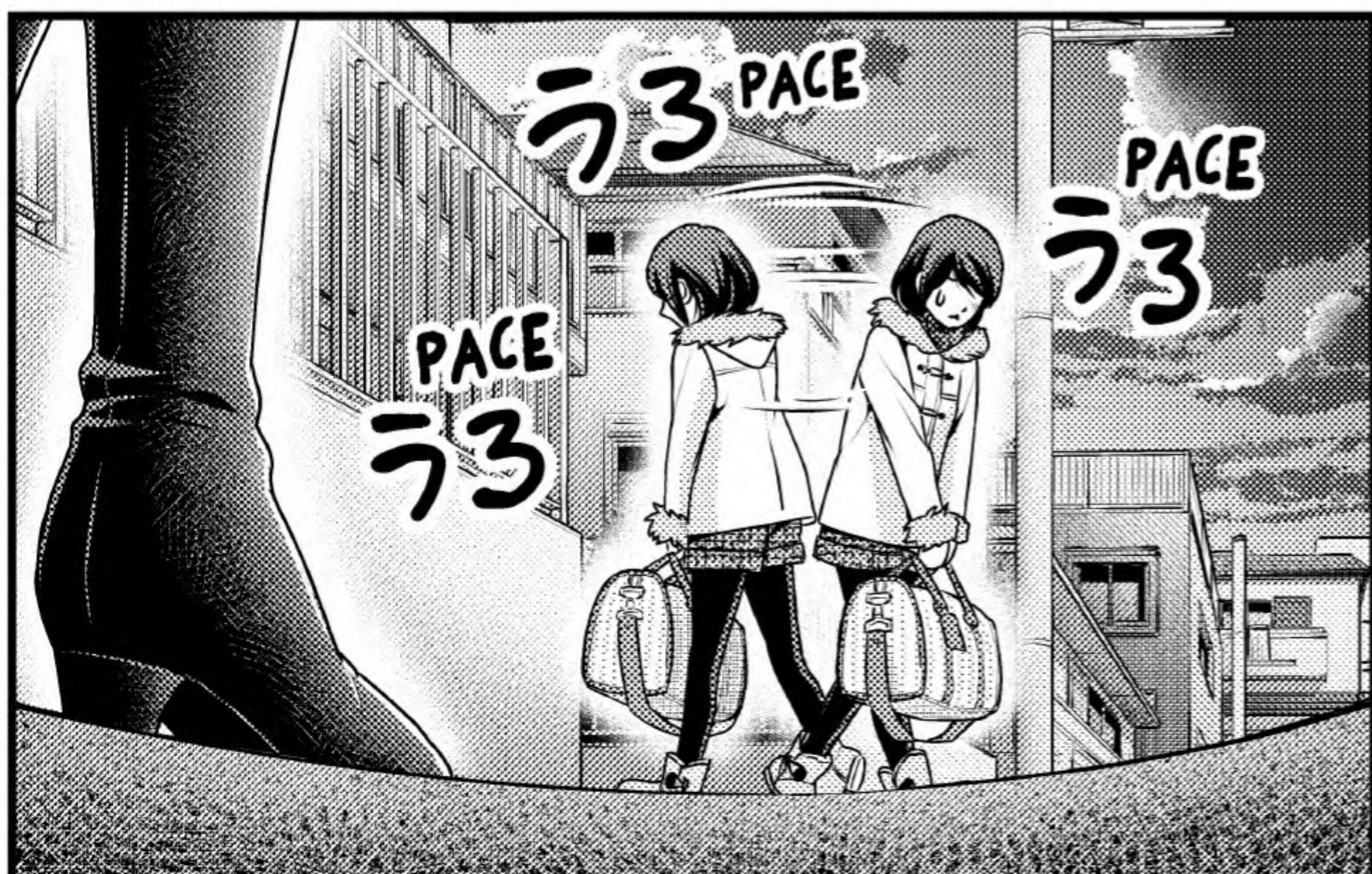
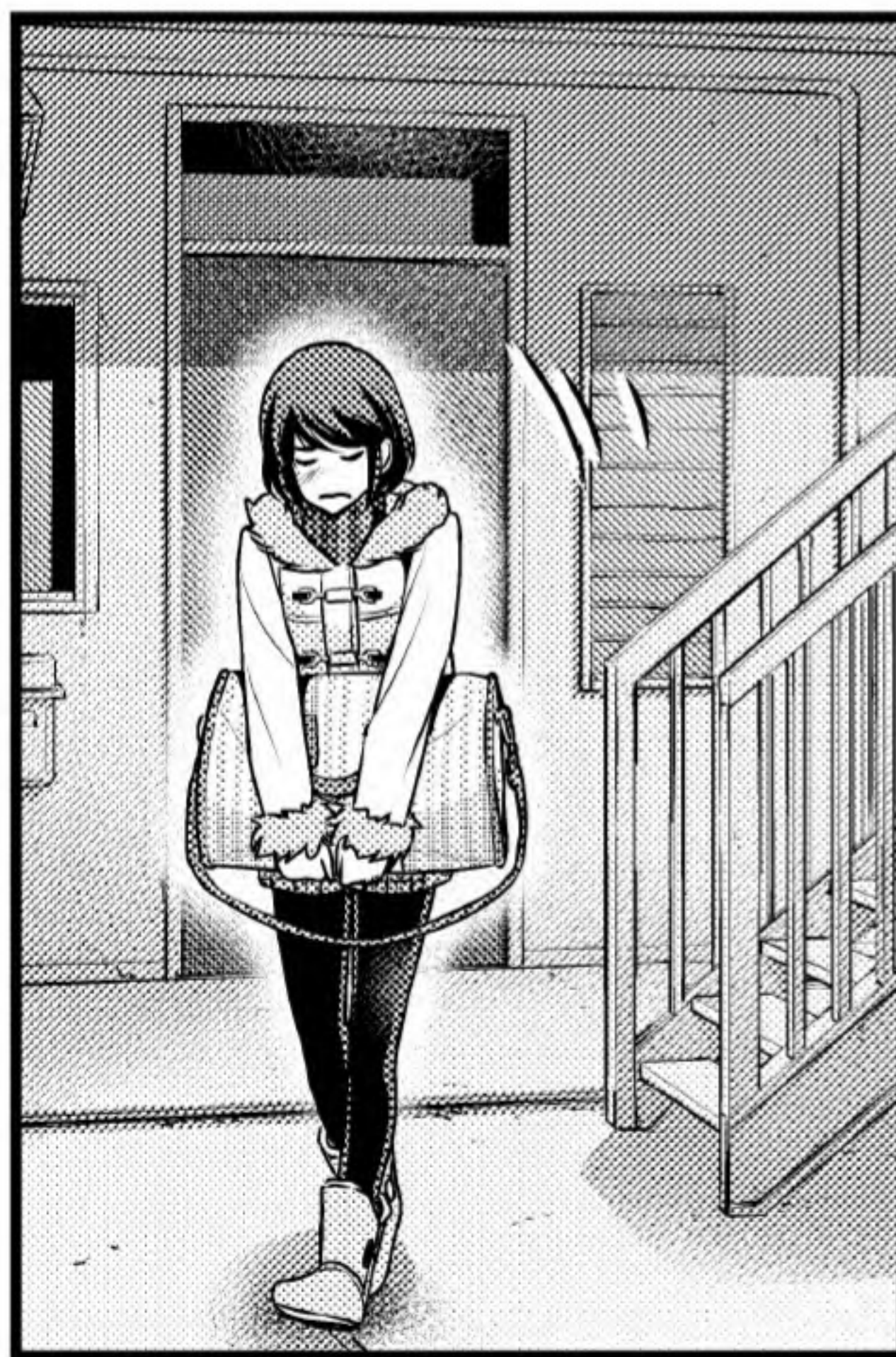
NOT  
AT  
ALL!

SO  
WHAT?!  
"IF SHE'S  
DOING IT,  
I WILL  
TOO!"  
IS THAT  
IT?!













WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING  
HERE?

WHAT  
ABOUT  
YOU?



WEREN'T  
YOU  
SUPPOSED  
TO BE  
OVER—

I CAME  
BACK ON  
VACATION!



WHY'RE  
YOU  
RUN-  
NING?!

SPIN





WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE MEETING OUTDOORS ...

Y-YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!

ARE YOU WEARING SEXY UNDERWEAR TODAY, TOO?!

...BUT I WAS WORRIED AFTER HE SUDDENLY CANCELED, SO I CAME OVER...



...  
AT THE PLACE OF A GUY WHO LIVES ALONE?



NOTHING IN PARTICULAR...

I JUST CAME TO TALK A LITTLE.



OH YEAH?

...



KEEPING ME IN THE DARK ABOUT YOUR SECRET LITTLE MEETINGS, AND EVERYTHING DISCUSSED IN THEM?

WELL? WASN'T IT?

"SECRETLY"...?



HAVE YOU TWO BEEN SECRETLY MEETING UP...

...THE WHOLE TIME I'VE BEEN OVER THERE?





IF YOU  
CAN'T  
TELL ME,  
IT MUST BE  
SOMETHING  
BAD.

WELL,  
THAT'S  
WHAT  
I WAS  
AFRAID  
OF...



I  
MEAN  
...



...THEN  
MAKING A  
MOVE ON  
HIM!

WHAT  
EXACTLY  
WERE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT, ANY-  
WAY? WHAT  
ADVICE WERE  
YOU GIVING  
HIM?

ACTING ALL  
SYMPATHETIC  
FOR HIS LONG-  
DISTANCE  
RELATIONSHIP  
ISSUES...



THAT'S  
ENOUGH!


EVEN  
IF IT  
WAS...



HE'S  
EASILY  
TEMPT-  
ED.

THAT'S  
NATSUO,  
AFTER  
ALL.

I TAKE  
IT THIS  
MEETING  
TODAY  
WAS YOUR  
IDEA,  
TOO?



IF HE HAS  
THE TIME  
TO BE  
CHEATING,  
HE SHOULD  
BE WORKING  
ON HIS  
BOOKS.

GOD, COULD  
THIS ALL BE  
FOR WRITING  
MATERIAL?





...?!

DON'T  
KNOW  
WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?

FUJII-  
KUN...



HE WAS  
SERIOUSLY  
HURTING!  
THAT'S WHY  
HE CALLED  
ME!

FUJII-  
KUN'S  
HAD IT  
REALLY  
ROUGH!

HOW DARE  
YOU ACT LIKE  
THIS WHEN  
YOU DON'T  
EVEN KNOW  
WHAT'S  
GOING ON!



...DO  
YOU  
WANT  
THEM  
TO BE  
TRUE?

THROWING  
ALL THESE  
ACCU-  
SATIONS  
AROUND...

WHY  
DON'T  
YOU BE  
A LITTLE  
MORE  
CONSID-  
ERATE?!



...CAN'T  
WRITE  
ANY-  
MORE!

AT  
ALL!



HUH  
...?

I THOUGHT  
HE'D ALREADY  
GOTTEN OVER  
THE RESPONSE  
TO HIS  
ANTHOLOGY?

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN

... "CAN'T  
WRITE"?

NAT-  
SUO  
...

SHE  
...

...SHE  
SAYS  
YOU CAN'T  
WRITE ANY  
MORE.

THAT  
THAT'S  
WHY YOU'VE  
BEEN  
UPSET...

IS IT  
TRUE?

HE  
HASN'T  
...

...TOLD  
ME ANY-  
THING...









SOR-  
RY...



WHY...

EVEN  
NOW...



I WAS  
SCARED  
THAT...

...MY  
WEAKNESS  
WOULD  
BE TOO  
MUCH OF  
A BURDEN  
ON YOU.

MIYABI'S  
RIGHT.



NAT-  
SUO  
...



TMP

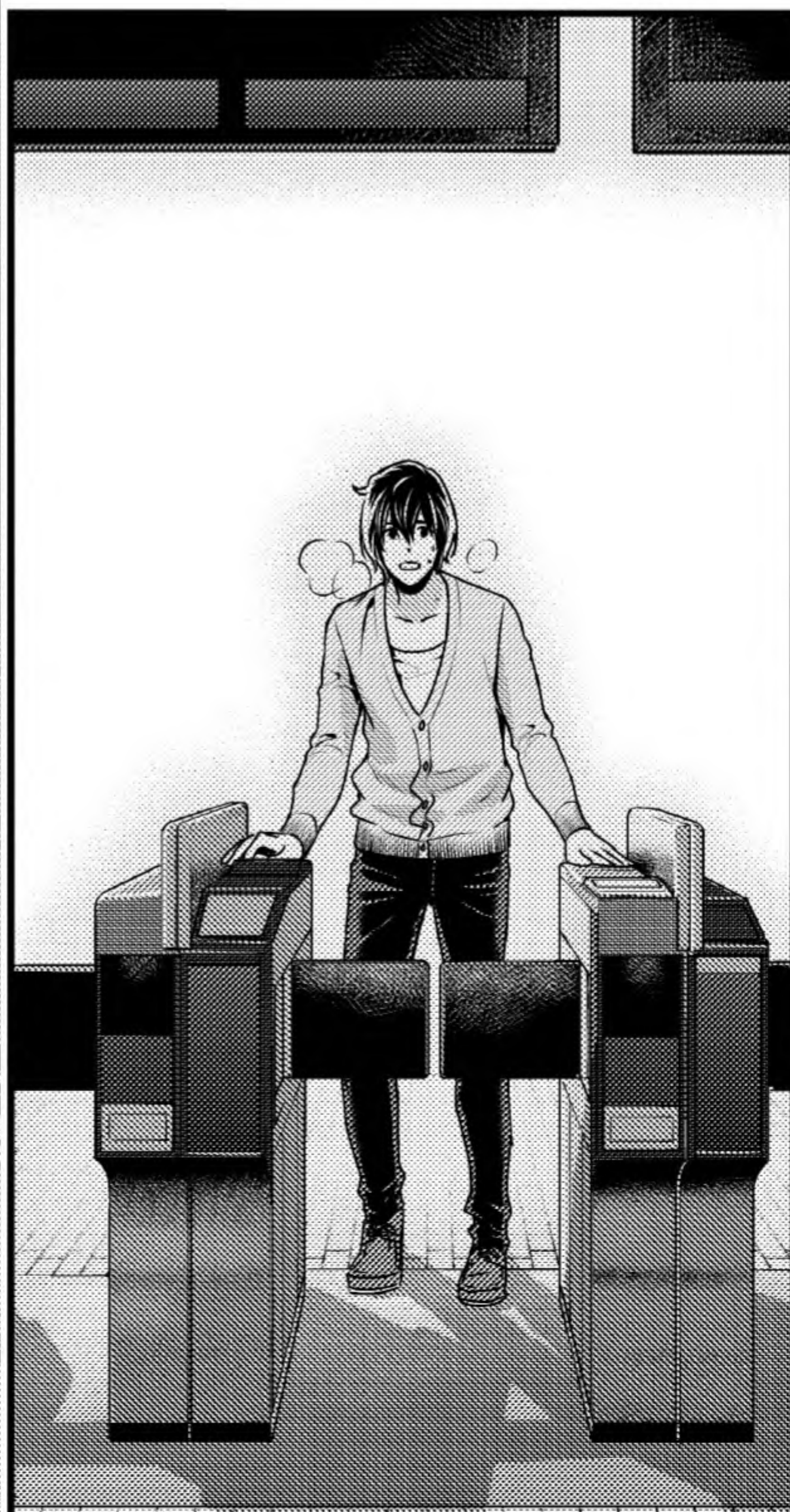
RUI!



I'M  
...

...YOUR  
GIRL-  
FRIEND!

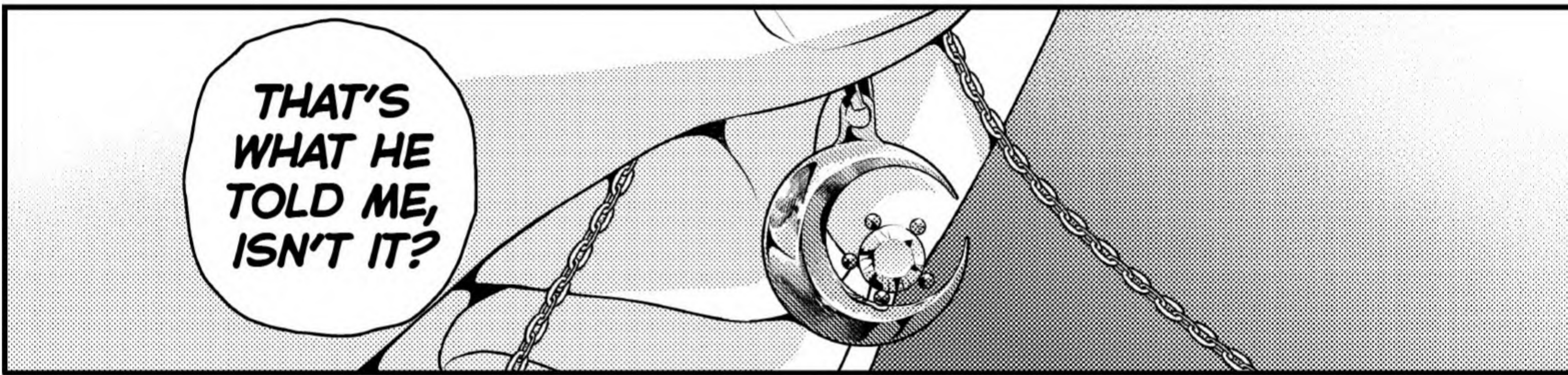








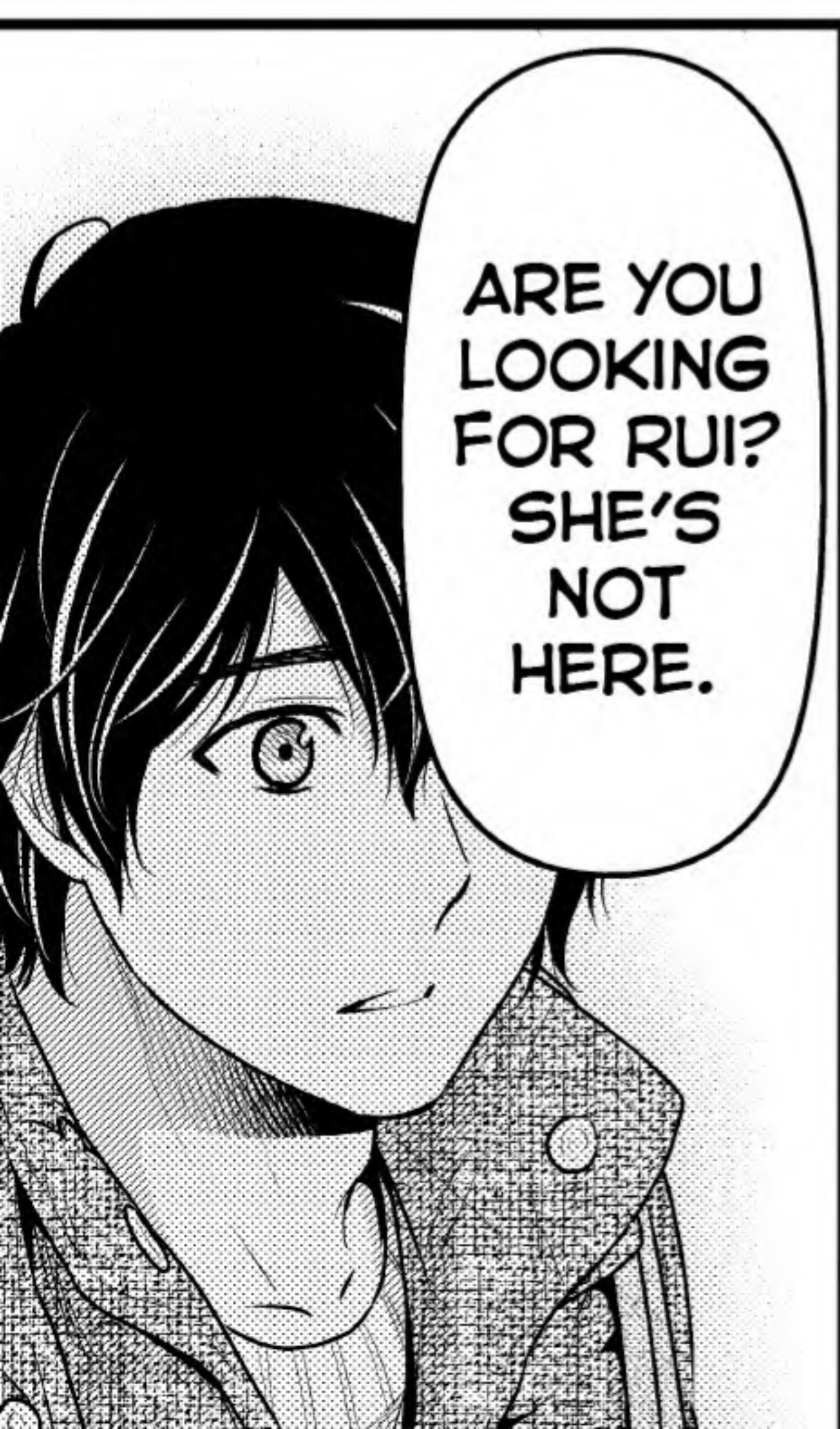








## CHAPTER 215: WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER







YES-  
TERDAY  
...

...DID  
SOMETHING  
HAPPEN?



HUH  
...

SHE  
HEADED  
OUT  
JUST  
NOW.

I DIDN'T  
ASK WHERE  
SHE WAS  
GOING.



IT'S JUST...  
SHE CAME  
HOME IN TEARS,  
SO I THOUGHT  
IT MUST BE  
SOMETHING  
BIG.

YOU  
DON'T  
HAVE TO  
TELL ME  
IF YOU  
DON'T  
WANT  
TO.

OH  
...

...



SO  
THAT'S  
WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON WITH  
NATSUO-  
CHAN,  
IS IT?

I  
SEE  
...

WE  
JUST...

...HAD A  
LITTLE  
MISUNDER-  
STANDING  
...





I SEE...  
IT'S  
FALLING  
ON YOUR  
VIRGIN  
REAR,  
HUH...

NOPE.  
THIS IS ALL  
FALLING  
ON VIRGIN  
EARS. I'M  
SHOCKED.

"EARS"!  
I SAID  
"EARS"!



HAVE  
YOU  
HEARD  
ABOUT  
THIS,  
FUMI-  
KUN?

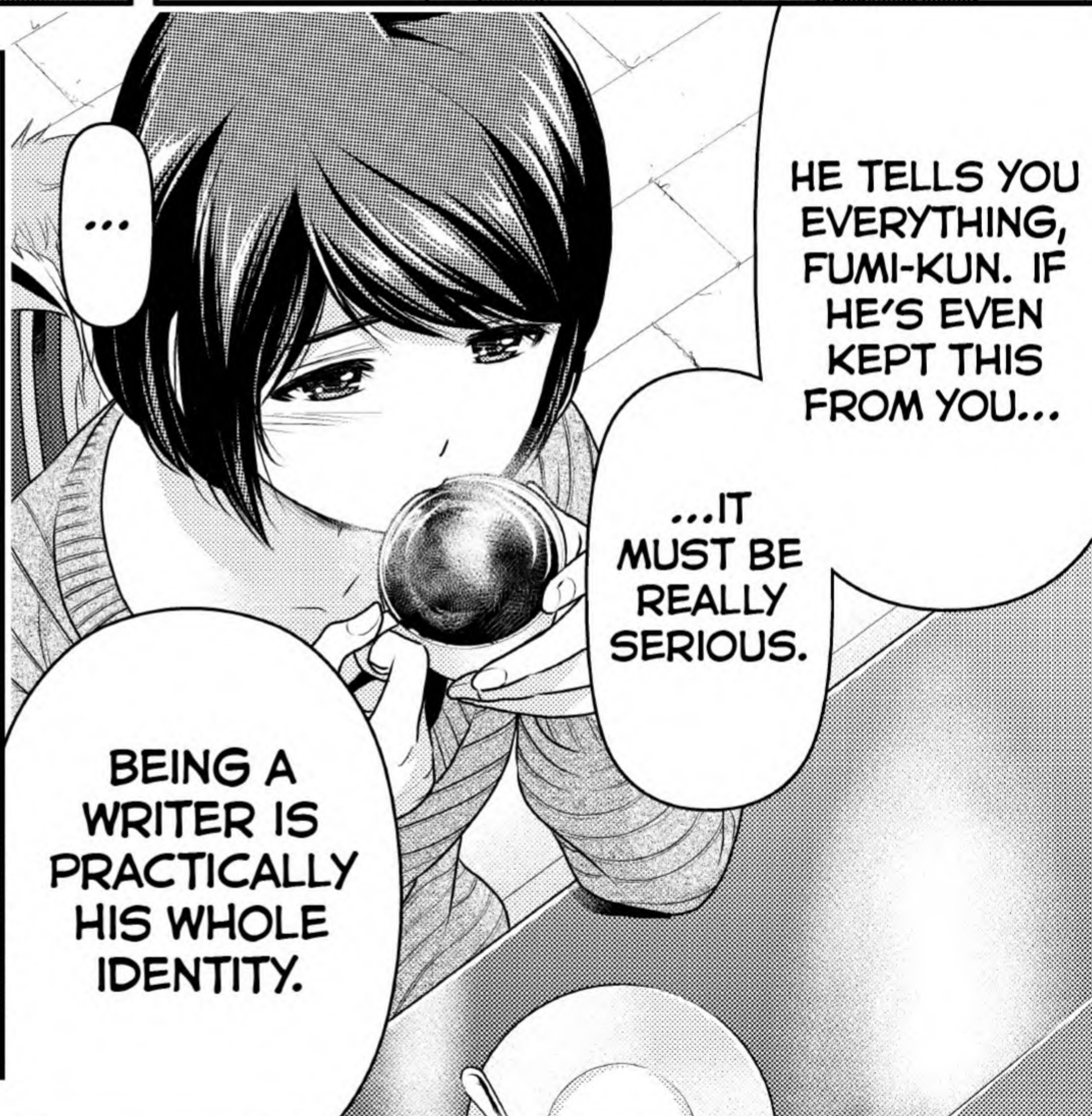
HOW COULD  
A KID THAT  
LOVES  
BOOKS SO  
MUCH NOT  
BE ABLE TO  
WRITE?

THAT WHOLE  
FURORE  
AROUND HIS  
ANTHOLOGY  
MUST BE  
HAVING AN  
EFFECT...



AFTER ALL,  
IT WOULD'VE  
MADE YOU  
DEPRESSED,  
RIGHT,  
RUI-CHAN?

KNOWING  
NATSUO,  
HE KEPT  
THIS QUIET  
BECAUSE  
HE DIDN'T  
WANT US TO  
WORRY. HE'S  
STUBBORN  
LIKE THAT.



BEING A  
WRITER IS  
PRACTICALLY  
HIS WHOLE  
IDENTITY.

...IT  
MUST BE  
REALLY  
SERIOUS.

HE TELLS YOU  
EVERYTHING,  
FUMI-KUN. IF  
HE'S EVEN  
KEPT THIS  
FROM YOU...



...I  
SHOULD'VE  
BEEN NICER  
TO HIM.

IN  
THAT  
CASE  
...

I  
KNOW  
...





I  
COULDN'T  
STAND  
THAT.

I'M HIS  
GIRL-  
FRIEND!

...THAT GIRL  
FROM HIS CLUB  
WAS ACTING  
LIKE SHE  
UNDERSTANDS  
HIM BETTER  
THAN I DO.

BUT  
...



...A  
REALLY  
AWFUL  
PERSON.

I  
TURNED  
INTO...



...WHEN-  
EVER  
I WAS  
WATCHING  
A DRAMA  
FILM...

BE-  
FORE  
...



EVERYBODY  
WORRIES  
ABOUT  
STUPID  
THINGS  
FROM TIME  
TO TIME.



IT'S SO  
STUPID!

I'M  
ALWAYS  
WORRYING  
ABOUT  
THIS SORT  
OF THING!









IF THOSE FEELINGS GET OUT OF HAND, YOU'LL END UP WANTING TO TIE HIM UP AND KEEP HIM LOCKED AWAY.

BE CAREFUL.



AND WHAT YOU "CAN'T STAND" ...

...IS THE IDEA OF HIM BEING STOLEN FROM YOU, ISN'T IT?

WHEN YOU HEARD HE WAS IN A SLUMP...

...THE FACT THAT HE KEPT IT A SECRET FROM YOU HURT MORE THAN YOUR CONCERN FOR HIM, RIGHT?



...WANT TO END UP LIKE THAT...

I DON'T ...

...



THE FACT THAT YOU GET DEPRESSED LIKE THIS IS PROOF THAT YOU LOVE HIM.

YOU'RE A NICE GIRL, RUI-RUI.

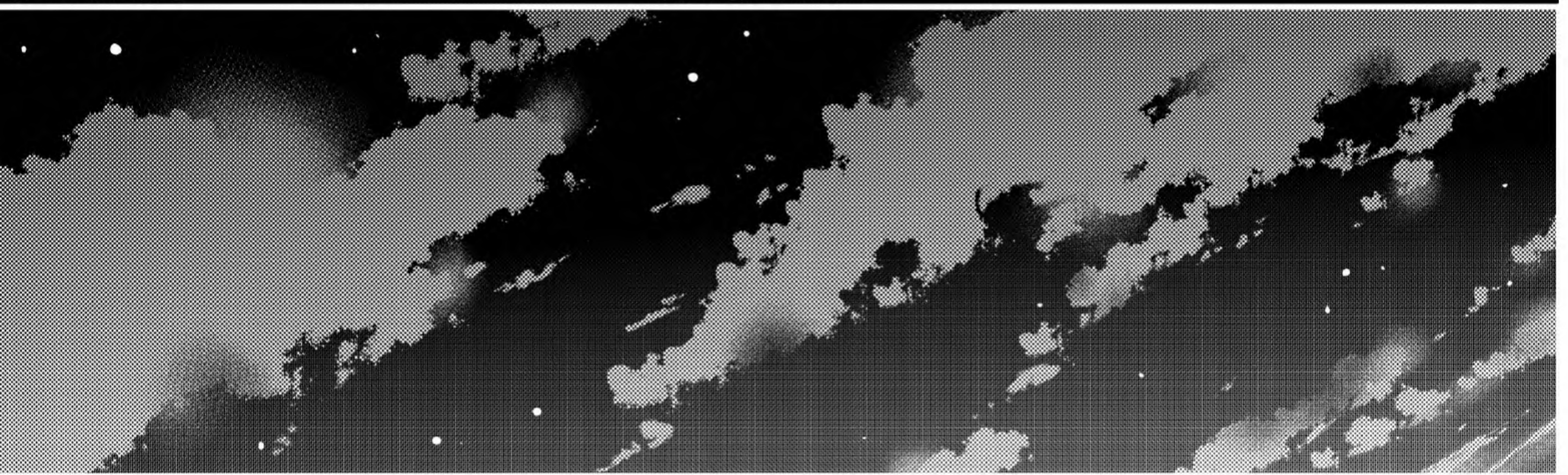
IT'S OKAY.





...YOU  
TWO'LL BE  
JUST LIKE  
YOU WERE  
BEFORE.

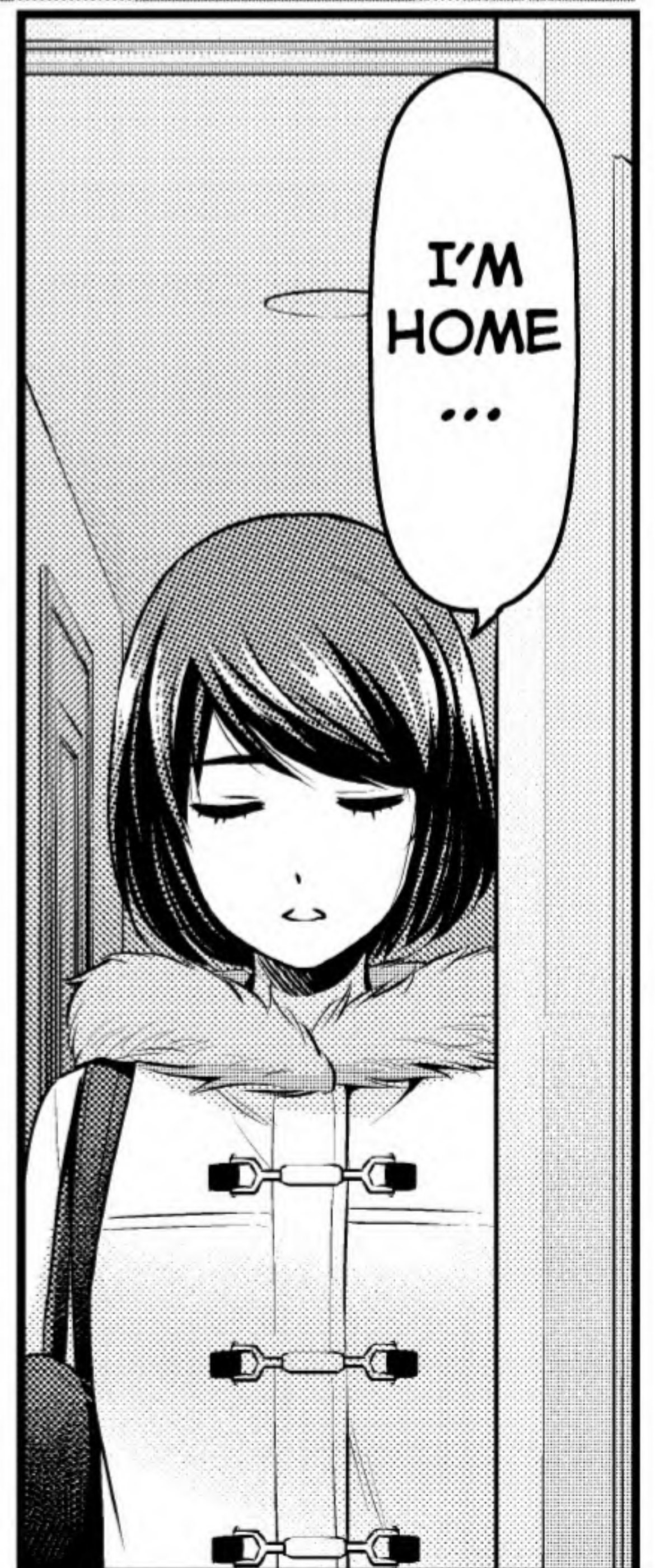
IF YOU  
APOLOGIZE,  
AND REALLY  
TALK IT  
OUT...



GOOD  
TIMING!  
WE'RE JUST  
ABOUT  
TO HAVE  
DINNER!

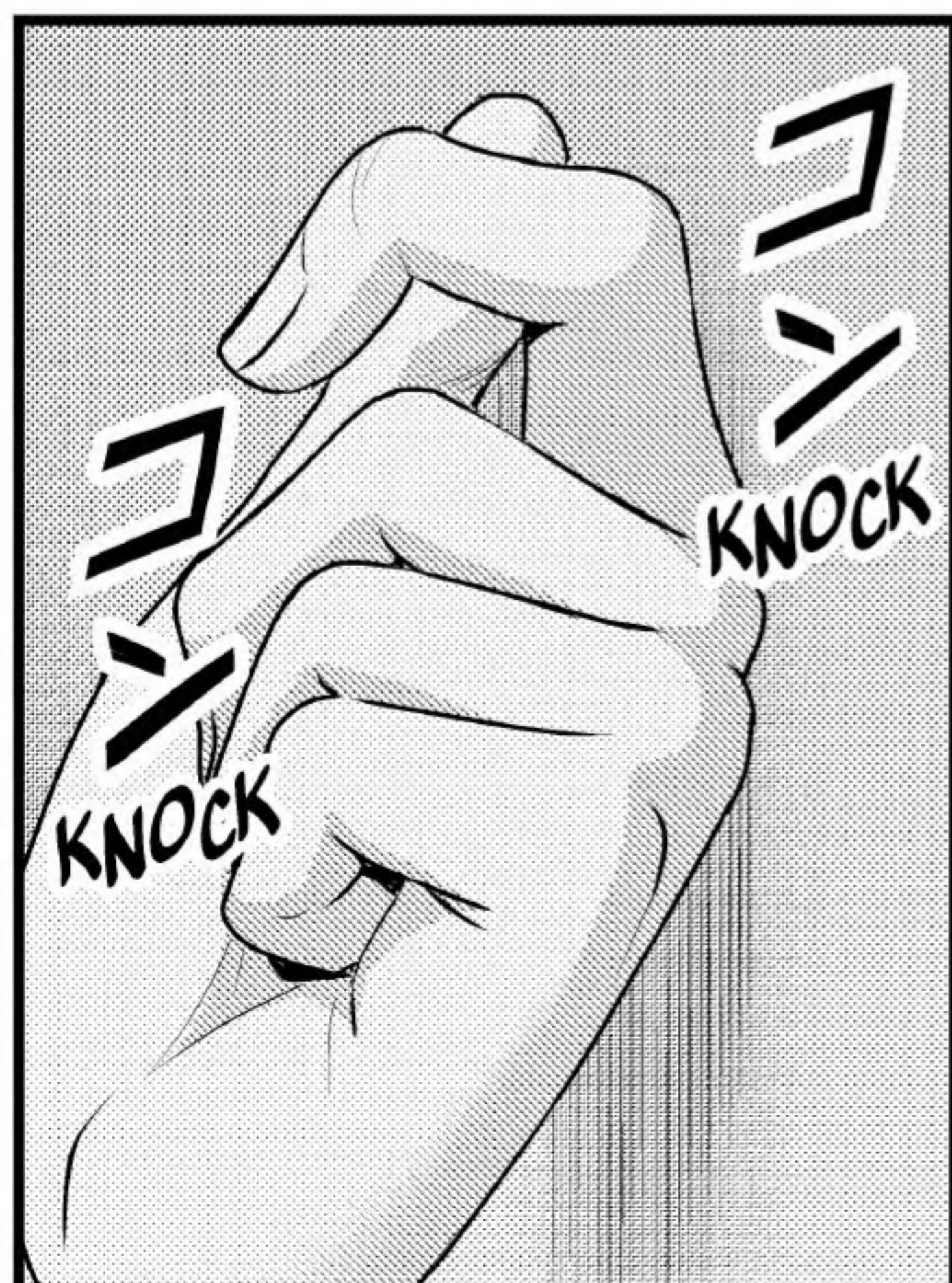
WELCOME  
HOME,  
RUI-CHAN!

WHERE  
HAVE  
YOU  
BEEN?

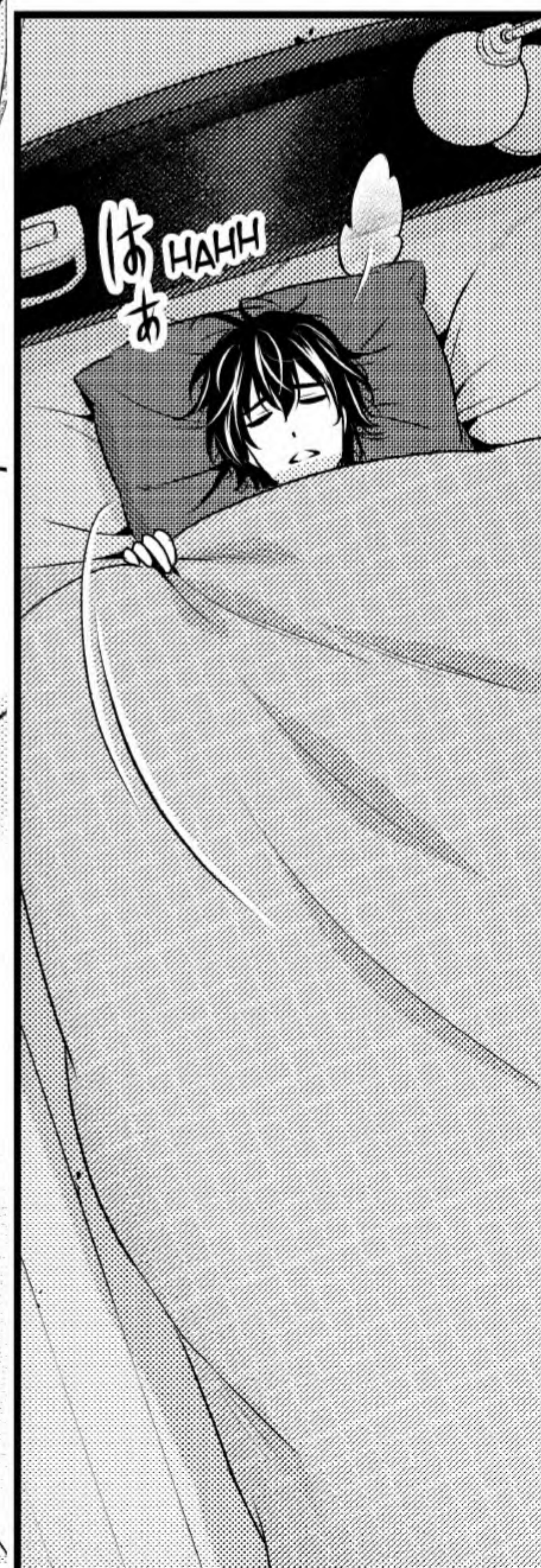


I'M  
HOME  
...









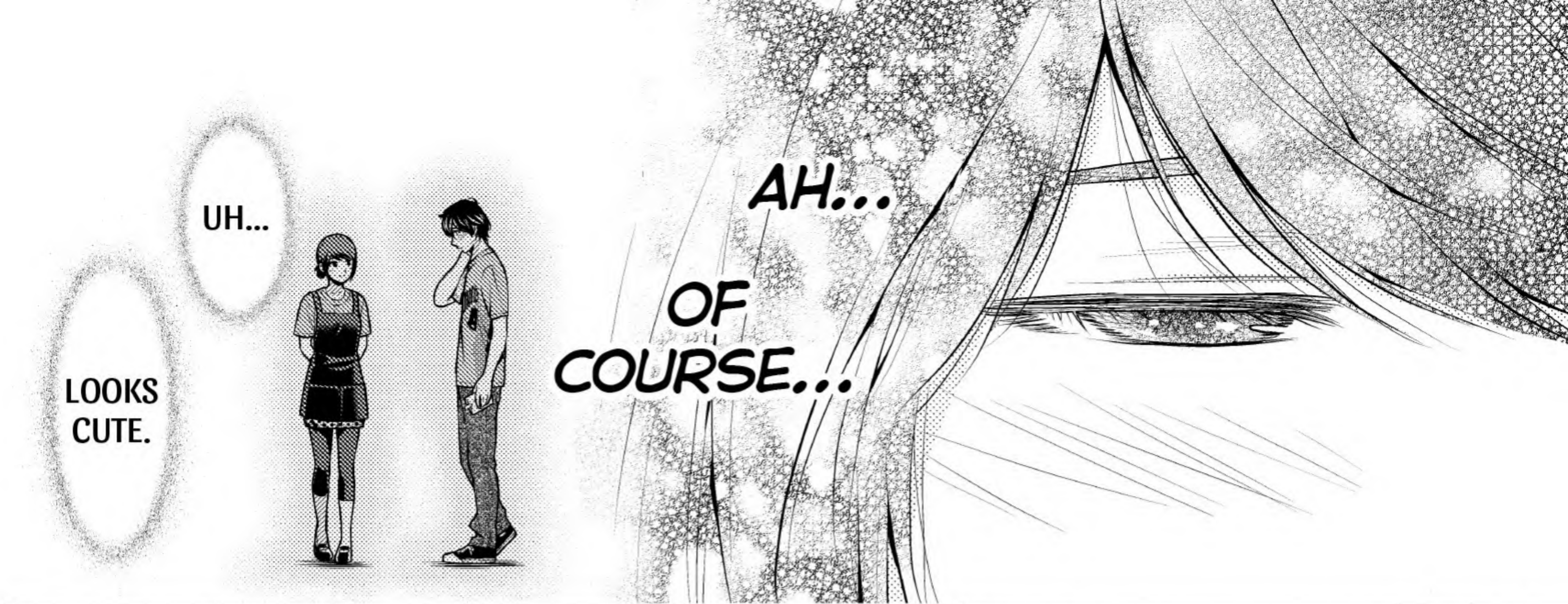








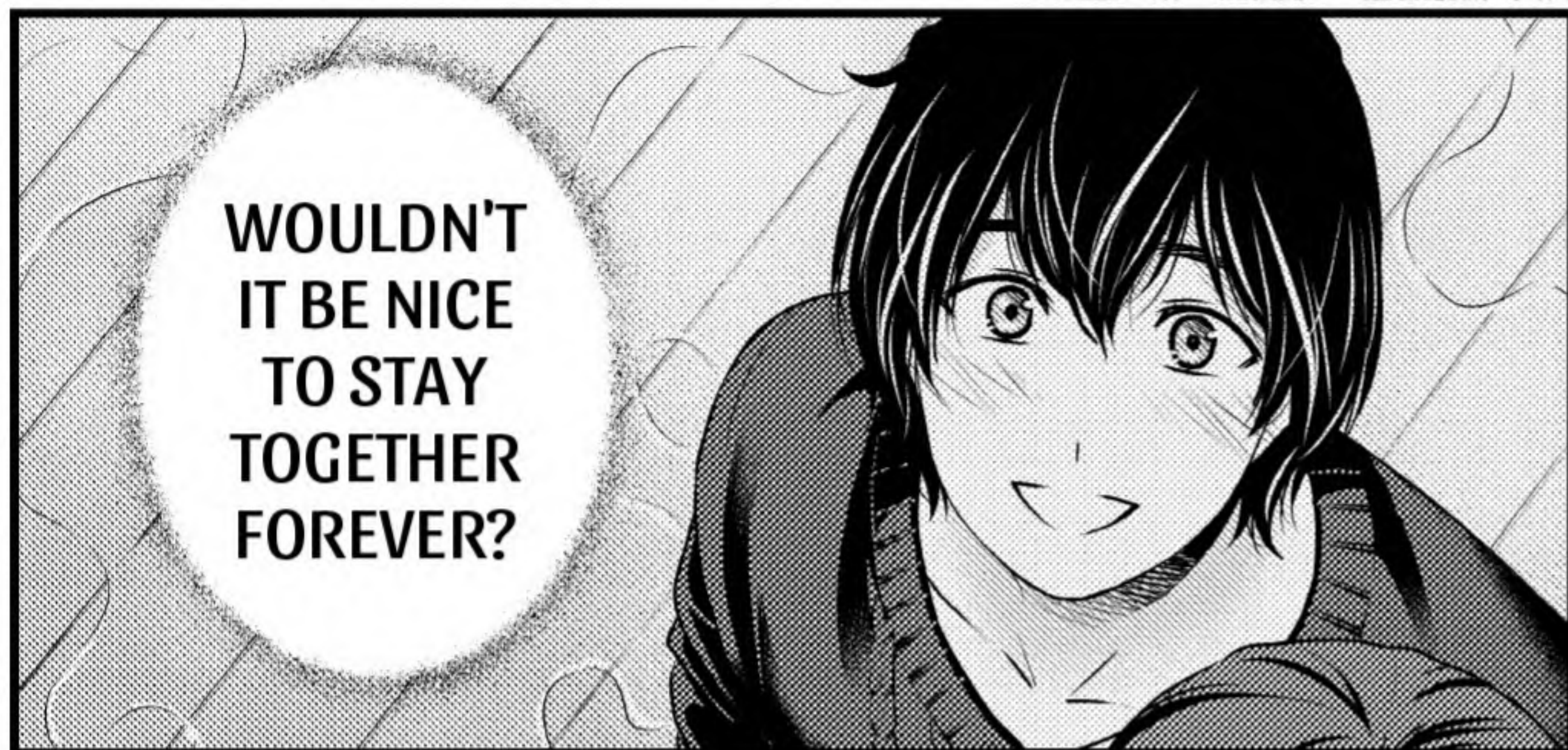




LOOKS  
CUTE.

UH...

AH...  
OF  
COURSE...



WOULDN'T  
IT BE NICE  
TO STAY  
TOGETHER  
FOREVER?



I'LL  
ALWAYS  
BE HERE  
FOR YOU.

NO  
MATTER  
WHAT  
HAPPENS,



I LOVE  
YOU,

RUI.



DO YOU  
EVEN NEED  
TO ASK?



DON'T  
YOU  
THINK  
THAT'S,

UM...

LOVE  
?



*I...*

**...NATSUO**

....







YOU'RE  
FLYING  
BACK  
TONIGHT  
?



I TOLD  
YOU IT WAS  
ONLY FIVE  
DAYS!

THAT'S  
SO  
SOON  
...

I'VE GOTTA  
GET READY  
FOR WORK,  
TOO.



YEAH  
...



THEN I  
GUESS  
WE'D  
BETTER...

...CHER-  
ISH THE  
PRECIOUS  
TIME WE  
HAVE LEFT  
TOGETH-  
ER.





IT'S A  
LITTLE  
EARLY,  
BUT...

...IT'S  
VALENTINE'S  
DAY  
CHOCOLATE.



SINCE I  
DIDN'T  
GET TO  
GIVE IT  
TO YOU  
LAST  
NIGHT...

HERE.  
I MADE  
THIS  
BACK IN  
AMERICA.



ALMOST  
SEEMS  
A WASTE  
TO EAT  
IT!

YEAH...!  
I LOVE  
IT!

DO  
YOU  
LIKE  
IT?



I'M SO  
GLAD I  
GOT TO  
GIVE IT TO  
YOU!

...!



SO,  
NATSUO  
...



THANK  
YOU,  
RU-





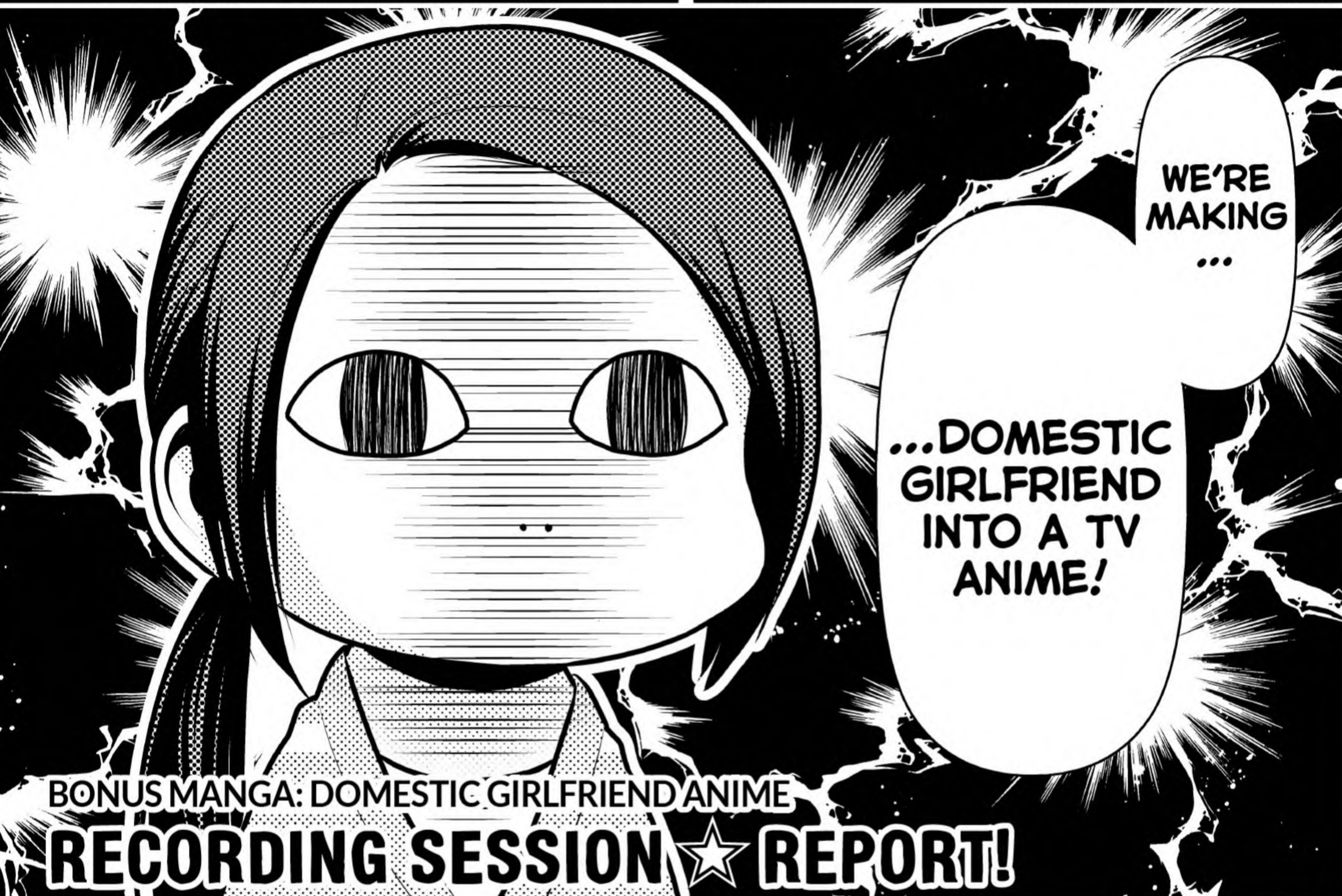
**...BREAK  
UP.**

**I  
THINK  
WE  
SHOULD  
...**





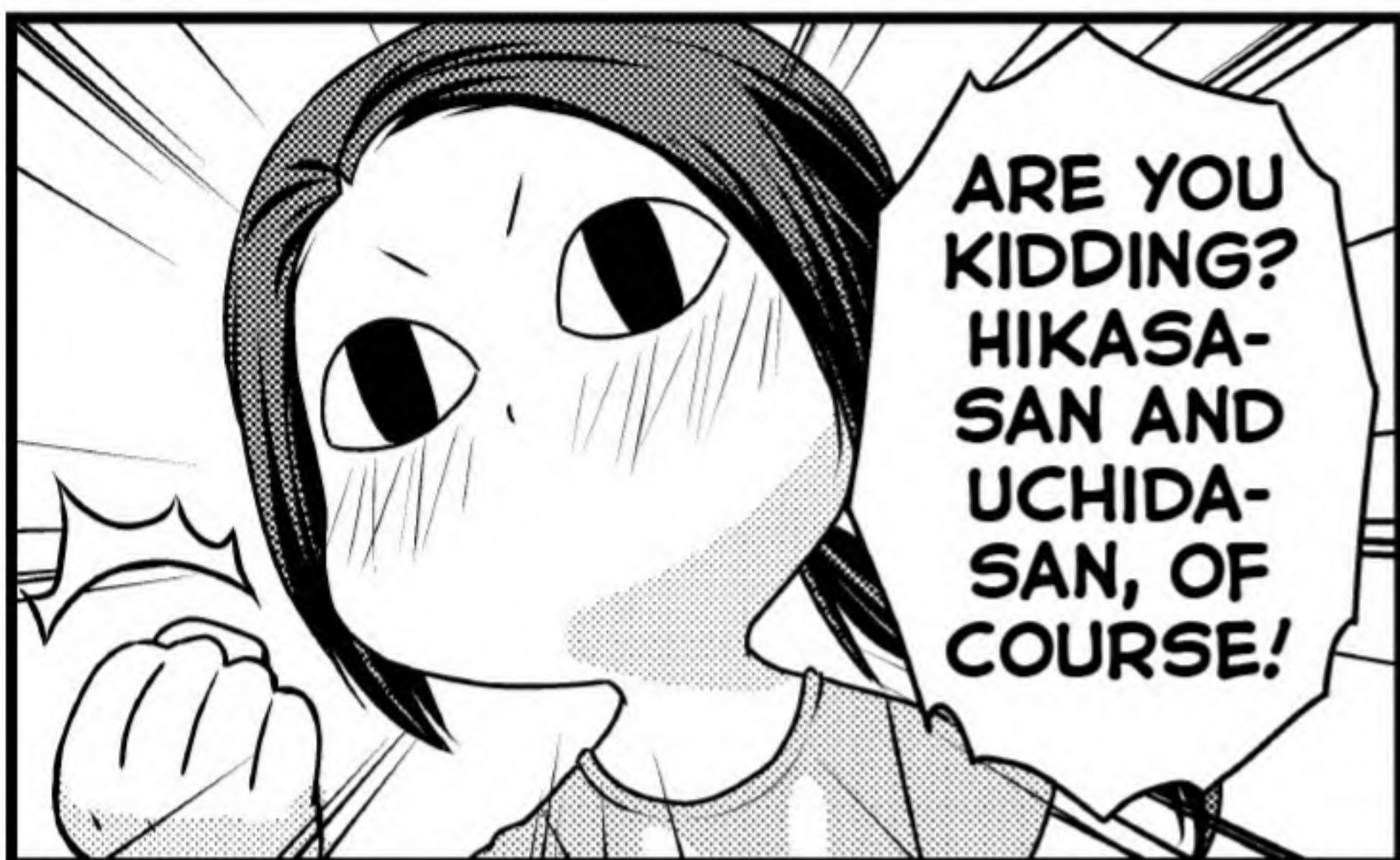




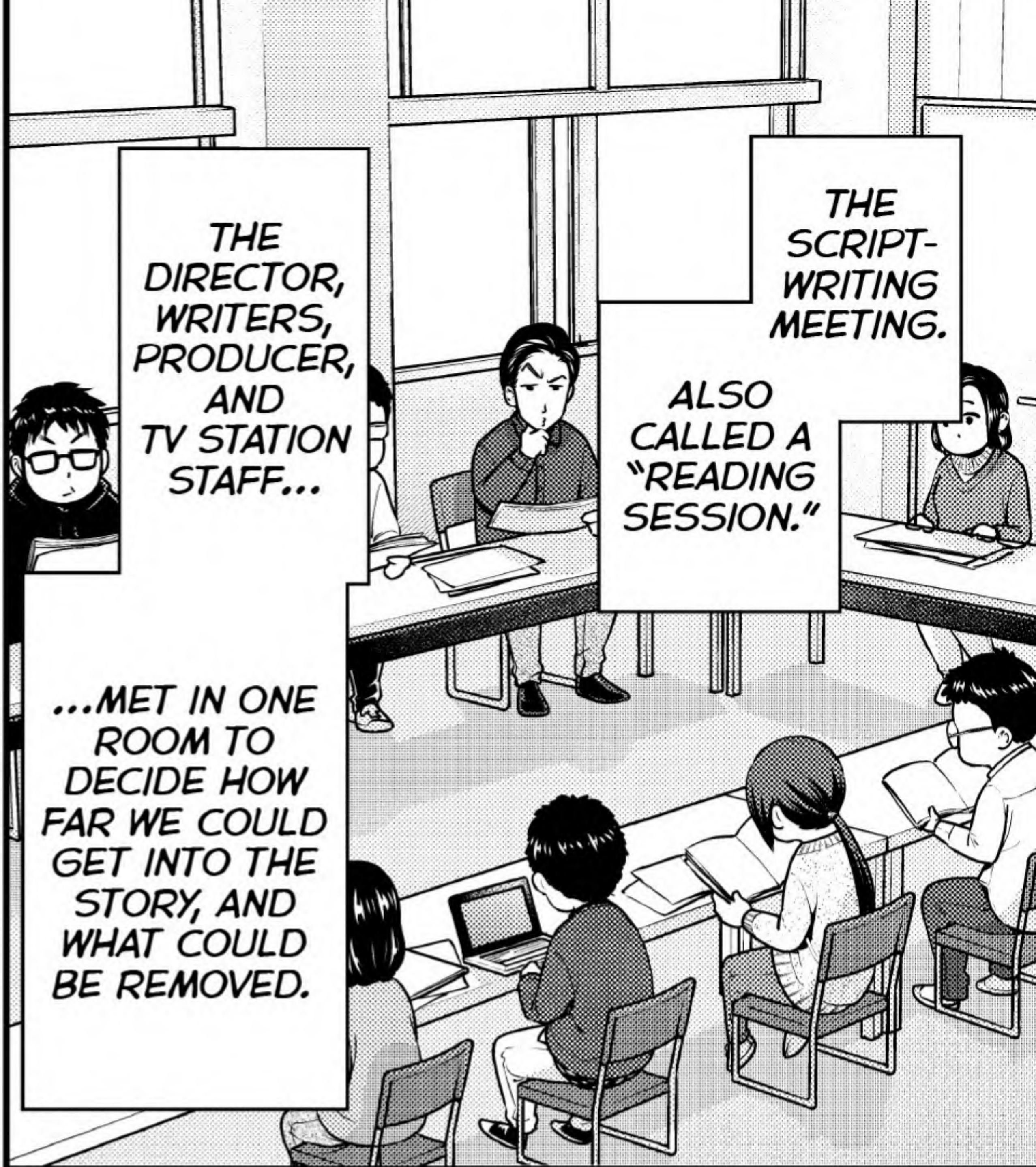




AS THE  
AUTHOR,  
DO YOU  
HAVE ANY  
VOICE  
ACTORS IN  
MIND?



ARE YOU  
KIDDING?  
HIKASA-  
SAN AND  
UCHIDA-  
SAN, OF  
COURSE!



THE  
DIRECTOR,  
WRITERS,  
PRODUCER,  
AND  
TV STATION  
STAFF...

THE  
SCRIPT-  
WRITING  
MEETING.

ALSO  
CALLED A  
"READING  
SESSION."

...MET IN ONE  
ROOM TO  
DECIDE HOW  
FAR WE COULD  
GET INTO THE  
STORY, AND  
WHAT COULD  
BE REMOVED.



THESE  
TWO ARE  
PERFECT!  
I CAN'T  
BELIEVE  
IT!

THESE TWO  
ACTUALLY  
PERFORMED  
AS HINA AND  
RUI FOR A  
MAGAZINE'S  
WEB  
PRODUCTION  
ABOUT FOUR  
YEARS AGO.



YOKO  
HIKASA-  
SAN AND  
MAAYA  
UCHIDA-  
SAN.



SIGN: STUDIO

THEN  
CAME THE  
RECORD-  
ING  
SESSION.



...I  
LISTENED  
TO  
AUDITION  
RECORDINGS  
FOR  
NATSUO,  
MOMO AND  
MIU.

AFTER  
THAT...

AFTER  
MUCH DISCUS-  
SION,  
EVERY-  
THING  
WAS SET.

THEY'RE  
ALL SO  
GOOD...



THEY'VE  
BOTH  
GIVEN  
THE OK!

I KNEW  
THEY'D BE  
PERFECT  
FOR A  
SEXY  
DEPICTION  
IN AN  
ANIME,  
TOO...

...BUT  
I WAS  
REALLY  
WORRIED  
ABOUT IF  
THEY'D  
ACCEPT.

YES!!

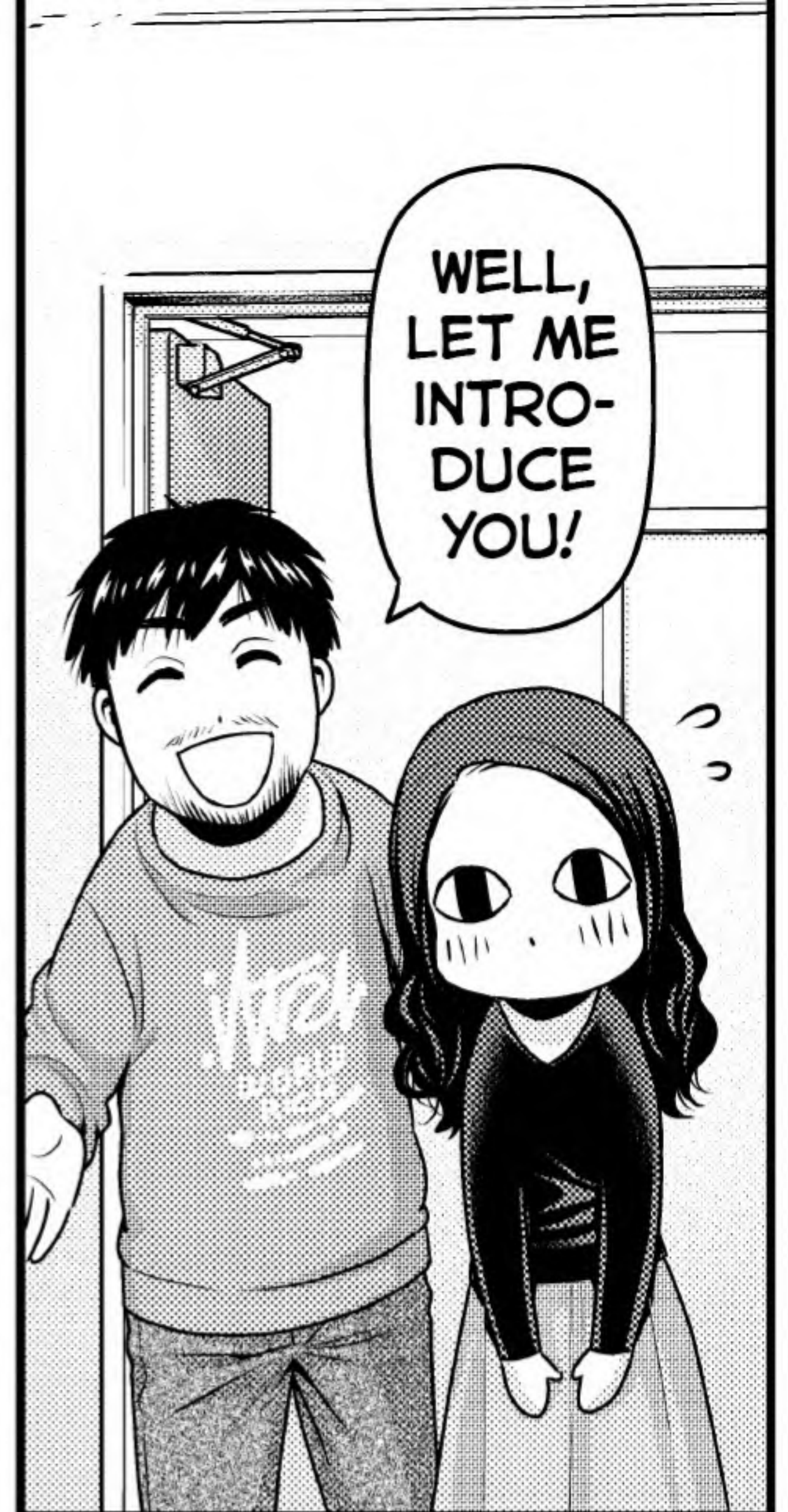
WAHHH  
ふわ





THANKS!

AH!  
GOOD  
WORK  
OUT  
THERE!



WELL,  
LET ME  
INTRO-  
DUCE  
YOU!



NICE TO  
MEET YOU!  
I'M TAKU  
YASHIRO!

TAKU  
YASHIRO  
NATSUO

WHAT  
A NICE  
YOUNG  
MAN!



NICE  
TO SEE  
YOU  
AGAIN!

MAAYA  
UCHIDA  
RUI

SHE'S  
EVEN  
CUTER  
AND  
SWEETER  
THAN  
BEFORE!



IT'S  
BEEN A  
WHILE!

YOKO  
HIKASA  
HINA.

SHE'S  
AS GOR-  
GEOUS  
AS  
EVER!



I HOPE  
NONE OF  
YOU ARE  
WORRIED.

THE  
CRAZIEST  
THING  
WAS...



OH,  
IT'S  
FINE  
!

S-  
STOP  
LOOK-  
ING!

HEARING  
PEOPLE  
READ MY OWN  
WORDS OUT  
LOUD MADE  
ME HAPPY,  
BUT IT WAS  
A LITTLE EM-  
BARRASSING,  
TOO.

WE DECIDED  
TO DO  
SOME TEST  
RECORDINGS  
TO HELP  
THEM GET TO  
GRIPS WITH  
THEIR CHAR-  
ACTERS.

WE  
STARTED  
OUT  
WITH  
JUST  
THOSE  
THREE.





I HOPE  
NONE OF  
YOU ARE  
WORRIED  
...



CAN YOU  
MAKE YOUR  
VOICE A  
LITTLE  
DEEPER,  
PLEASE?



EXCUSE  
ME? ABOUT  
NATSUO...  
I THINK HIS  
VOICE JUST A  
LITTLE HIGH  
PITCHED...



AND THEN  
WHEN WE  
ADDED...

...VETERAN  
VOICE  
ACTORS  
TO THE  
MIX...

YURIKA HINO  
MOM

NOBUO  
TOBITA  
DAD



KENJIRO TSUDA  
THE BOSS



...HOW THEY  
COULD  
ADAPT THEIR  
PERFOR-  
MANCE SO  
QUICKLY IN  
RESPONSE  
TO MY  
REQUESTS.

IT REALLY MADE  
ME REALIZE  
JUST HOW  
MUCH TALENT  
GOES INTO  
BEING A PRO  
VOICE ACTOR.





ALL RIGHT, LET'S RECORD THE CHATTER!

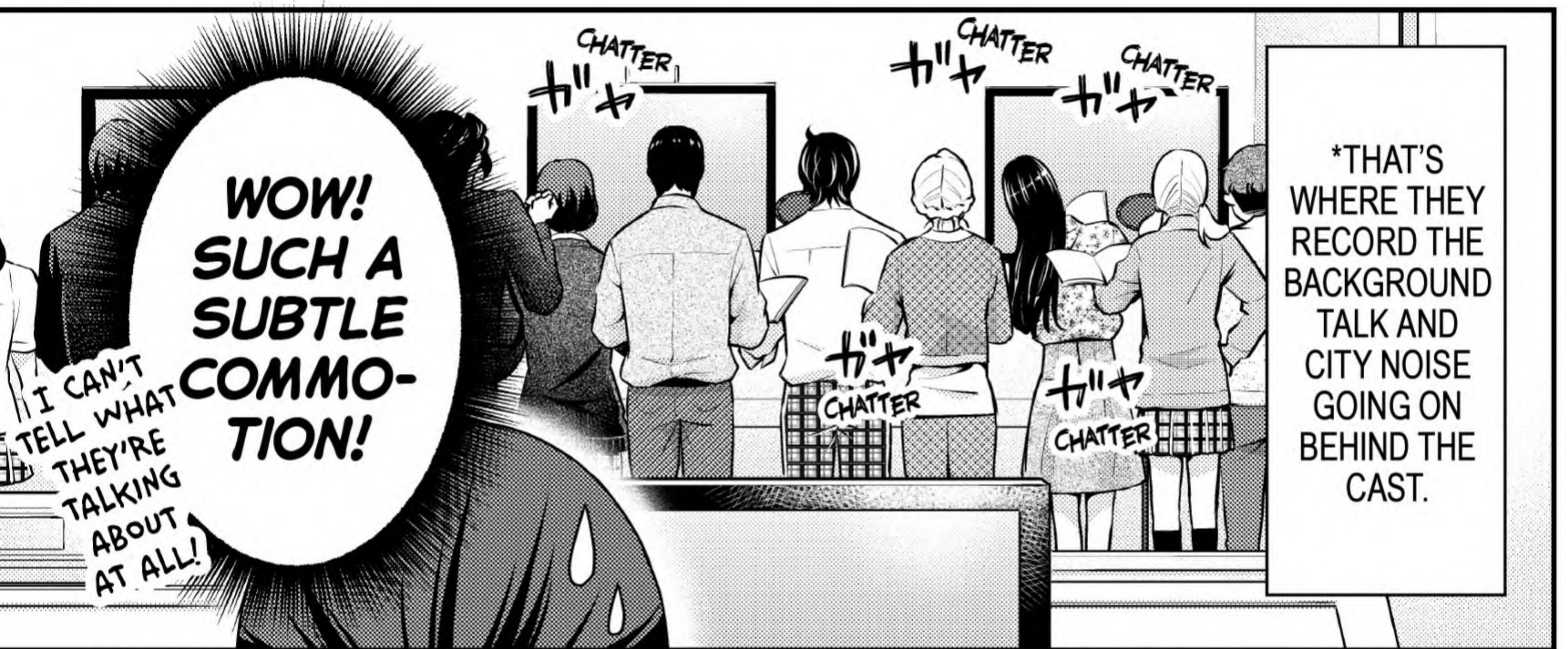
ANOTHER THING THAT WAS KINDA IMPRESSIVE WAS...



GO FOR IT!

ALL RIGHT, KNOCK YOURSELF OUT!

HIS ADLIBS ARE SO FUNNY!



WOW! SUCH A SUBTLE COMMO-TION!

\*THAT'S WHERE THEY RECORD THE BACKGROUND TALK AND CITY NOISE GOING ON BEHIND THE CAST.



HOW ABOUT YOU? YOUR FEELINGS ARE...

THESE TWO HAVE SUCH SEXY VOICES!

YOU PROMISED TO BECOME MY SLAVE, DIDN'T YOU?

HIKARU MIDORIKAWA KIRIYA

HE'S GREAT AT PLAYING A SHALLOW GUY!

TAKEAKI MASUYAMA YUYA

IDIOT.

KAKUTO KAJIWARA KAZU

YOU'RE GREAT, HINA-CHAN!

...WAS REALLY INFORMATIVE AND MOTIVATING!

GETTING TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE SHOW THEIR PERFORMING SKILLS...

THAT SOUNDED A LITTLE FORMAL, DIDN'T IT?

KONOMI KOHARA MIU

HER VOICE IS SO CUTE!

HARUKA YOSHIMURA MOMO

RUI-RUI! ♡

HIS EXCHANGES WITH NATSUO ARE GREAT!

UH... I DON'T GET IT.

TAKUYA EGUCHI FUMIYA





WHOA! おお

Say your prayers!

I WAS SERIOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH HOW WELL HE REPLICATED IT!



THE NEXT DAY, WE USED A NATIVE PRONUNCIATION SPEECH SYNTHESIZER.

Say your prayers!

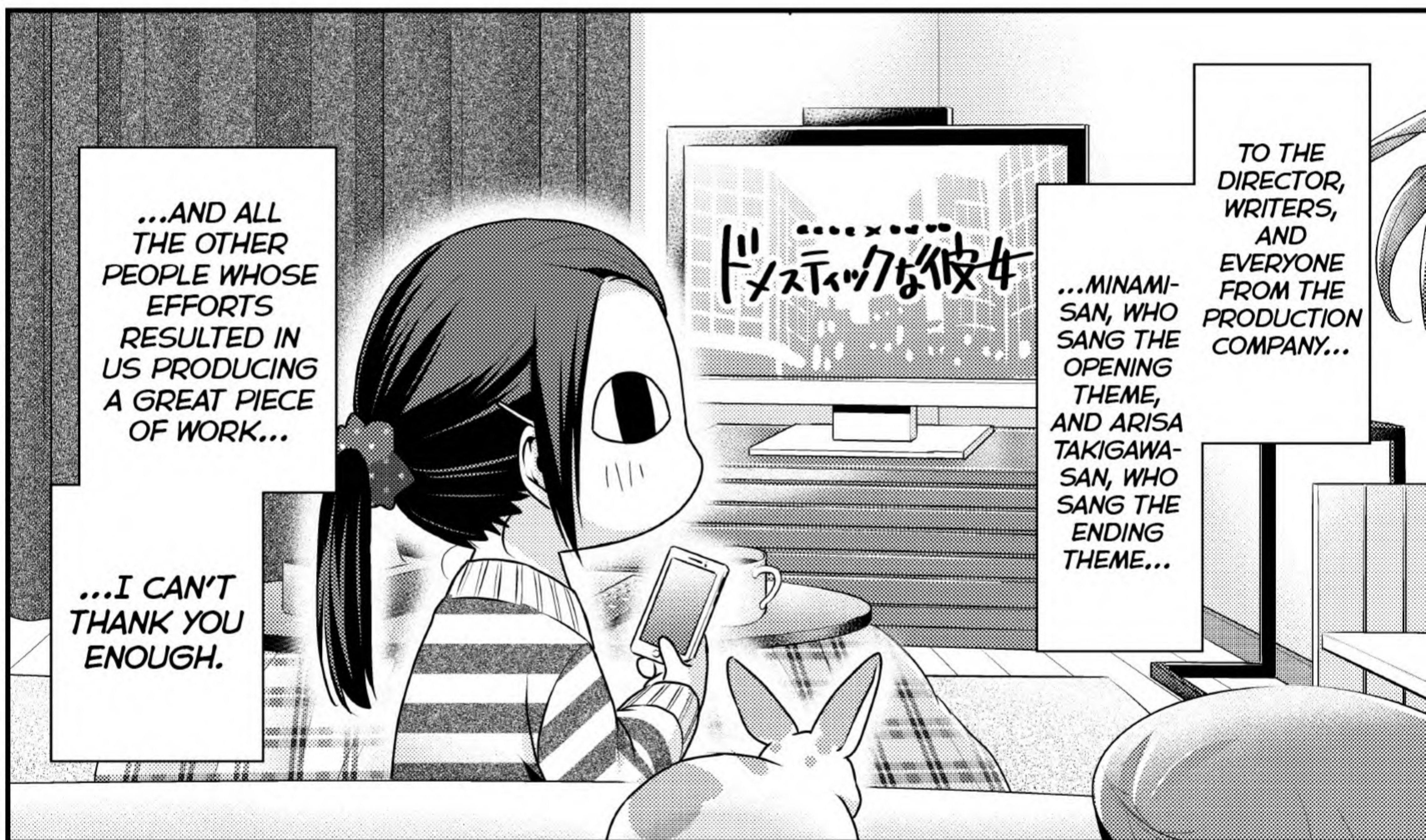


NATIVE!

COULD YOU DELIVER YOUR ENGLISH LIKE A NATIVE, PLEASE?

MY MOST DIFFICULT REQUEST WAS...

TASUKU HATANAKA  
AL



...AND ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE WHOSE EFFORTS RESULTED IN US PRODUCING A GREAT PIECE OF WORK...

...I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH.

ドメスティックな彼女

...MINAMISAN, WHO SANG THE OPENING THEME, AND ARISA TAKIGAWASAN, WHO SANG THE ENDING THEME...

TO THE DIRECTOR, WRITERS, AND EVERYONE FROM THE PRODUCTION COMPANY...



THE MANGA WILL BE CONTINUING SOON. I HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF ADDITIONAL SCENES!

AND TO THOSE OF YOU WHO STILL HAVEN'T SEEN THE ANIME, PLEASE CHECK OUT THE BOX SET!



## **Domestic Girlfriend 22**

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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Lettering by Daniel Park  
Editing by Sarah Tilson  
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